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Elizabeth Boyd, Grub Street, and patronage: a study in eighteenth century women's writing

by

Heather Harper

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Department of English

Edmonton, Alberta
Spring 2003

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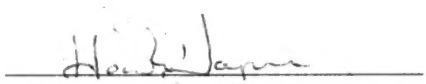

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December 9, 2002

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Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled "Elizabeth Boyd, Grub Street, and patronage: a study in eighteenth-century women's writing" in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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6 December 2002

Date that the thesis is approved by committee

Abstract

This project is a recovery of the life and works of the early eighteenth-century poet, novelist, dramatist, essayist and shop owner, Elizabeth Boyd. It engages with original archival and genealogical research, and draws on a growing body of historical and theoretical analyses of lower and middling-class women's involvement in the circulation of political ideas through print in the first decades of the eighteenth century.

The political, commercial, and even philanthropic nature of Boyd's works meant that she was probably unknown (at least as a single writing identity) to London readers, apart from specialized patrons of political and court-sponsored art. The first chapter of the dissertation attempts to recover and retrace the life of the writer herself, and the subsequent four chapters are framed by exploration of her shifting relations with her benefactors and her movements in the printing and retailing trades.

The second chapter examines Boyd's entrance into print (very much from the bottom level of the trade) and her sale of her satirical talents at a very young age: a move that was prompted by her sole support of her impoverished family. The third chapter examines Boyd's attempt to integrate the publication of a novel with an ambition to open a stationery business and her (uncommon and unexplained) access to favours from the Whig government. The fourth chapter traces Boyd's evolving political conscience, as she uses her poetic and polemical talents to express a heightened awareness of humane concerns, especially the issues of poverty, childbirth, and marital abuse. The fifth chapter examines Boyd's uncommon gambles with genre by focussing, especially, on her publication of a drama and a periodical for women.

Acknowledgments

I am especially grateful to Isobel Grundy, not only for her kind attention over the course of this project but also for her scholarship. It inspired my interest in this area of study long before I come to the University of Alberta with the hope of working with her. Thank you for trusting me with a project that you believed a worthy one.

Also, members of my committee, Katherine Binhammer and Sylvia Brown, thank you for your insightful comments during our committee meetings.

Over the course of this project I have also benefitted from the advise and historical insights of Frances Harris, Valerie Hart, Colin Shrimpton, Estates Office, Alnwick Castle, Northumberland, and Claude Scott, Jane Clare, Emma Yench, and Alison Kenney, researchers at the Westminster Archives Centre.

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Introduction

Elizabeth Boyd was probably born in 1710 and died in 1745. By 1732, at age twenty-two, she had already published five occasional poems of compliment and a poetry collection; that year she published a novel. Her aspirations were lofty--to become the "new Elisa," a "Daughter of the tuneful Nine"[1]--but they soon vied with dreams of a genteel living and ultimately, one suspects, were overwhelmed by the vicissitudes of life as a small business woman in a city that had few scruples about the young, single, infirm, or poor.

During her eighteen-year career, Boyd wrote for the moment--pamphlet verses, hasty miscellanies, political criticisms, and flattery. She tried her hand at a novel, a play, and a periodical, and she was the first to boast that each was valuable as the "Bauble of an idle day" (*V* 82). Her stationery and pamphlet-selling business was established with two hundred and eleven pounds raised largely from the nobility, and she maintained intricate business ties with some of the most powerful Whig politicians of Walpole's administration. She was at the midst of popular entertainment venues and in the thick of political controversy, and she shared an adaptability with the idols of her youth, such as Susanna Centlivre and Eliza Haywood, though never their popular acclaim. She worked as a writer and a shop owner in the uncomfortable midst of the fast-paced making and breaking of businesses and livings--and people.

So far not only critical commentary but also more general knowledge about Elizabeth Boyd's life and works remains deficient. In her own century, David Erskine

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[1] "On Louisa's NOVEL, call'd, The Happy Unfortunate," Prefatory Poem, *FP*.

Baker mused with antiquarian interest and a nagging curiosity, "Who this lady *was* I know not, but find her to have been a Devotee to the Muses, from a dramatic Piece published under her Name, entitled, *Don Sancho*. Farce."[2] His comment suggests that Boyd's meagre fame had completely fallen off, and this was probably not long after her death, or conceivably even before. Regrettably Boyd failed to spark the interest of an eighteenth-or nineteenth-century amateur enthusiast of women's history and writing. As scurrilous or flighty as artists such as Laetitia Pilkington or Elizabeth Thomas were as portrayed by these memoirists, some biographies offered veritable facts spiced with the kind of local lore and memory that allowed traditions to take shape and later reader interest to crystalize.[3] In the nineteenth century, even without such biographical information about Boyd, various compilations did include some idiosyncratic references to her works (such as her calls for war in the 1730's). These inclusions of Boyd suggest that she did not meet ideological criteria for inclusion, and that editors were entirely unfamiliar with the author and her major works, perhaps because she was not commercially important enough or virtuous or lyrical enough to be memorialized by friends. *Allibone's Dictionary of English Literature and British and American Authors*

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[2]Baker, David Ernskine, *Biographia Dramatica or a Companion to the Playhouse* 2vols. (1764) ii, 90-91.

[3] T. Gilliland observes, "This lady published two dramatic pieces, called Don Sancho; or, the Student's whim, ballad opera, and Minerva's Triumph, a masque, 1739." (*The Dramatic Mirror including a biographical account of dramatic writers . . . and . . . distinguished performers.* 2 vols [London, 1808].) The following texts include minor and even controversial writers from Boyd's time, but say nothing about Boyd herself: Anne Elwood, *Memoirs of the Literary Ladies of England, from the Commencement of the Last Century*. 2 vols. (London, 1843); George Colman and Bonnell Thornton, eds. *Poems by Eminent Ladies*. 2vols. (London, 1755); Frederick Rowton, ed. *Cyclopedia of Female Poets*. (Philadelphia, 1848), also published as *The Female Poets of Great Britain, Chronologically Arranged, with Copious Selections and Critical Remarks*; Jane Williams *The Literary Women of England* (London, 1861).

(1858), a multi-volume work that boasts unprecedented thoroughness, cites only one of Boyd's lesser polemical poems, never mentioned before or again in this sort of secondary text; and this under the gender-equivocal E. Boyd, as though her sex was unknown or even presumed male.

After the nineteenth century, interest in Boyd was patchy, but curiosity about this relatively unknown figure is seemingly on the rise. Early in the last century, B.G. MacCarthy offered sharp criticism of her novel as though it represented the last throes of an early romance style that she found unsavoury.[4] More recently, however, several of Boyd's short poems have been included in important anthologies. Mary Anne Schofield briefly examines the novel *The Female Page* as the "most representative of the masquerade romances of the early to the middle years of the eighteenth century."[5] Cheryl Turner observes that Boyd's 1732 subscription list attracted a significant number of female readers, and a handful of anthologies of genre, especially of theatre history, name Boyd's single play, *Don Sancho, or the Student's Whim.*[6] Select works by Boyd have been cited in general anthologies of women's writing; most notably *The Feminist Companion to Literature in English* offers a succinct description of some of her preferred

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[4] B.G. MacCarthy, *The Female Pen: Women Writers and Novelists 1621-1818* (Cork Ireland, Cork UP, 1944) 1994 ed. 23, 231.

[5] Mary Anne Schofield, *Masking and Unmasking the Female Mind: Disguising Romances in Feminine Fiction 1713-1799* (Newark: U of Delaware P, 1990) 30-33.

[6] Cheryl Turner, *Living By the Pen: Women Writers in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Routledge, 1994) 112.

themes and her "rapid, compressed, paradoxical style."[7] The editors of *The Feminist Companion* are unique in their awareness of the variety of genres she attempted.

One inconvenience and, admittedly, an expense facing the researcher who would look beyond Boyd's major writings is the unhandy distance of many of her short poetic pieces, which are held at distant repositories. A preliminary list of Boyd's works is easily available in Foxon's *English Verse 1701-1750* and in the English Short Title Catalogue. Some of her compositions are available on microfilm, but many must be obtained from the special collections of major libraries (see"Works Cited").[8] Her novel, *The Happy Unfortunate, or The Female Page* (1732, re-issued 1737) is available as an unfriendly Garland facsimile reprint that offers a short introduction but no annotation.

Probably most of the work of attribution and dating of Boyd's works has been performed, and is available in Foxon and the ESTC, although there is always the happy possibility that more of her works will emerge.[9] In the course of research I did come across at least one work that can likely be attributed to Boyd, and I suggest more specific or alternative dates for minor poems. Previously 'Louisa' was the only pen-name cited as Boyd's by anthologies, but as can be ascertained from the title pages of her already-

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[7] Virginia Blain, Isobel Grundy, and Patricia Clements, *The Feminist Companion to Literature in English: Women Writers from the Middle Ages to the Present* (Yale: YUP, 1990) 125-126. She is also included in Dale Spender and Janet Todd, *Anthology of British Women Writers* (London: Pandora, 1989) 56.

[8] Formerly the Eighteenth-Century Short Title Catalogue, this bibliographical database claims to list the holdings of all extant works published in English before 1800. It lists the major libraries that hold Boyd's works but it can also provides the researcher with valuable information about publishers' careers, prevailing themes, and patterns of pamphlet debates.

[9] This project engages with all but one of Boyd's attributed works, "Verses humbly inscrib'd to Sir William Morris, bart. on his return" (1730). All others were located in The Eighteenth Century microfilm collection or ordered as facsimiles or microfilms (see "Works Cited").

attributed works, she also used 'Lovisa,' 'Eloisa,' and the abovementioned 'E. Boyd.'[10]

Gathering personal information about Boyd still poses more of a challenge to the reseacher than even the assembling of her works. The author herself remained close about her origins and her family, possibly an indication of her humble roots but perhaps also of complicated political allegiances. None of the contemporary newspapers marked her demise, and the few third-party commentaries that do note her (posthumously) seem to miss the mark. Strangely, in this century Boyd, probably a second or third generation Scot, was claimed by a compiler of Irish writers as one of his own--she can be imagined responding cheekily with one of her many Hibernian "backside" jests, which have lost their full (unmannerly) significance to the modern reader.[11]

Prior to this study, the most recent and reliable biographical information about Elizabeth Boyd was compiled incrementally from personal references in her works by Roger Lonsdale, who confesses the scarcity of ascertainable facts. He claims that she was a very versatile writer who first appeared on the London scene in 1727 and disappeared again in 1745. Relying on the author's hints about her private life, he suggests that her father was in the "employ of the Stuart family" and that her mother was elderly and

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[10] Boyd first used 'Louisa' in 1727 for her long poem *Variety*, 'E.B.' for some political poems after 1731, 'Elizabeth Boyd' for her novel, and 'Eloisa' for her periodical (1945). Her first initial or both her initials may have been used to offset the detrimental effect of sex on earning power, but as Cheryl Turner observes, women also used literary disguises "solely to add an appropriate quality to their publications" (95) This is true of Boyd.

[11] D.J. O'Donoghue, *The Poets of Ireland: A Biographical and Bibliographical Dictionary of Irish Writers of English Verse* (Dublin: Hodges Figgis & Co., 1912). O'Donoghue's speculation spread to later Irish enthusiasts, including Brian Cleeve, who distinguished himself as the sole estimator of Boyd's birth, with the approximation "c. 1700" Brian Cleeve, *A Biographical Dictionary of Irish Writers* (Westmeath: The Lilliput Press, 1985) 16-17.

dependent upon her daughter's income as a writer. He cites the three dedicatees of her novel as early patronage influences, and locates Boyd's first stationery shop in George Court, Prince's Street, and her last residence in Vine Street, near St James's Church.[12] After Lonsdale seemingly revived modern critical interest in Boyd, Michael Dobson also established that Boyd was a member of the Shakespeare's Ladies Club in the 1730's. More recently, in the course of research on other polemical writers, Tone Sundt Urstad located a poem in Boyd's hand dedicated to Robert Walpole, which she speculates was part of the author's bid to write for the government in 1737.[13]

Given the skeletal biographical details of Boyd's life, I resolved to dedicate a significant proportion of research time to ascertaining her birth family, where and under what conditions she set up her stationery shops, who her patrons were and the nature of their involvement, what her financial gains and losses were, and how her publishing patterns emerged. The entire first chapter is, therefore, dedicated to her personal biography, and chapters two through five are framed with biographical facts and speculations about Boyd at each stage of her publishing career.

Like Lonsdale, I also found that incremental information can be a valuable source for biographical insight; however, I have elected to be cautious about some of Boyd's already few personal references, as she was inclined to layer her writing personae. Alternatively I extracted as much as possible from her title pages and dedications and

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[12]Roger Lonsdale, *Eighteenth Century Women Poets: An Oxford Anthology* (Oxford: OUP, 1989) 134-5.

[13] Michael Dobson, "Ladies Man," *The Making of the National Poet: Shakespeare, Adaptation and Authorship 1669-1769* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992) 146-158; Tone Sundt Urstad, *Sir Robert Walpole's Poets: The Use of Literature as Pro-Government Propaganda, 1721-1742.* (Newark: U of Delaware P, 1999) 32.

from her suggestive subscription list to the novel. This proved fruitful. An advantage of tracing a single author's career in detail is that comparative and chronological examination of publishing patterns reveals information not only about the author herself but also her webs of commercial and political commitments: financial circumstances, migration, publisher and patron relations, her proximity to public events, and, ultimately, how one like Boyd--needy, clever, unknown--could negotiate market forces. Specifically I hope that my research around Boyd's simultaneous use of the marketplace and political patrons (especially as it is set out in chapters three and four) speaks to the way in which a writer could survive the shift from a patronage to a print economy in the early eighteenth century.

In addition to studying publishing details, I sought insight into Boyd's personal circumstances with the aid of parish registers. From the point of view of genealogical 'proof,' this labour-intensive search was a failure: I can only speculate that this Elizabeth Boyd was the daughter of Judith and William Boyd of St Martin-in-the-Fields, Westminster. I was also unable to locate letters by or to Boyd, although subsequent chapters cite specific archives that may yield results still--some are quite promising, but an additional and likely lengthy trip to these repositories proved too costly for this researcher. I have tried to offer an informed speculation about the social and economic context out of which Boyd emerged. This research may act as a springboard for further enquiry, and I hope that the general biographical content of the thesis will help to broaden the sense of what was possible for a woman emerging out of and entering into this specific social and literary environment.

Very little is known about the private lives of many of the writing women of this generation, perhaps because they moved wittingly between genres, publishers, and social stratifications of readership, sometimes writing under their own names, but often more stealthily. Knowledge about the most prolific writers of Boyd's era, and indeed the most important women writers has increased in recent years. While earlier studies were impaired by lack of literary-historical context, our current (better) understanding is still held back until more work is done on the disparate careers of many women. As well, the whole historical picture around these women can be better understood. A detailed examination of the unique writing career of Boyd can contribute to extending our knowledge of the whole early eighteenth century writing scene.

Positioned after Aphra Behn but before the more 'modest' women writers of the mid-century, Boyd wrote in a transitional print culture which accommodated and even encouraged the semi-anonymous voices of commercial writers who were central to the development of a critical political press in England. Analysis of Boyd's response to commercial contexts forms the second strand of argument in this thesis. Brean Hammond observes that any "understanding of what is termed 'Augustan' writing, and of what is valuable in it, has been constructed against the grain of the very professionalism of imaginative writing that is its greater significance."[14] Women like Mary Davys, Elizabeth Thomas, Laetitia Pilkington, and Eliza Haywood could seek livings through simultaneous and layered activities of commercial involvement. They experienced both the advantages

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[14] Brean S. Hammond, *"Hackney for Bread": Professional Imaginative Writing in England 167-1740* (Oxford: Clarendon P, 1997) 5.

and the financial shortcomings of moribund modes of patronage, and they ushered in and shaped future modes of market-based production. Boyd offers an extreme example of this practice. Not only did she go into trade while she published (like Davys and Pilkington), she also secured a living from those at the very top of political office and through her adaptability at the very bottom of a print-driven culture--in the less romantic realm of pamphlet wars, lampoons, and retail trade. In part, this project seeks to explore one woman's experience as a member of this "middle generation" of writing women, who lived in a, seemingly, utopian climate of individual charm and guile, and in a dystopian reality of servitude and perpetual trafficking of ideas.

Consideration of women in print politics and book and pamphlet production should at some point engage with Paula McDowell's *The Women of Grub Street*, which proves the extent of middling and lower-class women's involvement in print creation and establishes their important place in public life.[15] In the context of McDowell's study, the value of a writer such as Boyd would not be mined from her individual works and their literary qualities but from her processes of material production, as the processes are themselves forms of her political action. Chapters two through five of this project address issues of this material production as they apply to each of Boyd's works at every stage of her career. They reveal that Boyd's approach to book and pamphlet production was far outside of expected patterns of authorship, editorial input, and printing: it was guided by a variety of reactive, utilitarian, and immediate life circumstances and by the

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[15] Paula McDowell, *The Women of Grub Street: Press, Politics, and Gender in the London Literary Marketplace 1678-1730* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998). She speaks about Boyd's business ventures (52).

'muses' of public personalities and political forces.[16] This is one reason why her works are so protean and perhaps do not lend themselves to close study of canonical qualities; although, I will argue that they are, at times, heavily allusive, sharp, humorous, and adventuresome. They are often open to irony and to the subtlest of satirical readings. Sometimes they even surprise with their literary qualities: Boyd herself points out that Augustianism (important in the construction of literary values) is not opposed to professionalism.

Seeking out a writer like Boyd on her own terms not only opens our minds to fresh standards of artistic appraisal, but also offers a sense of historical particularity. Certainly most of the works that are explored here are opportunistic, role-playing, and topical; they also offer sites for rich debate about a range of issues that concerned Boyd as a woman. Her 'proto-feminism' is unmistakable to modern readers: one never gets the feeling that she saw herself as alienated from the topical and political. While young, she was fired with optimism to be part of a collective of famous writing women. As her politics mature, her writing gives us an acrid taste of what it is like to witness laws, customs, and financial arrangements that always come down on the side of men. A young Boyd laughed at world leaders building warships, calling them boys who play with paper boats; eighteen years later she makes us hear the hair-raising screams of the widows of these grown-up sailors. I hope that explanation and contextualization of her feminist themes contributes to the general scholarly curiosity in commercially-interested women:

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[16] Boyd was never a member of the Stationer's Company. Robin Myers, letter to the author, 21 January, 1999.

not as Grub Street bottom-feeders (so says literary lore), but rather like hardy water striders who foraged extreme environments.

A third strand of this project is literary patronage. I did not start out with the conception that this writer was particularly influenced by the highborn or the famous. However, archival and textual information emerged and forced a look at intricate webs of favour and mutual benefit that an author could weave over the course of her career. For reasons that are still unknown, Boyd had access to favours from very highly-placed people, some of whom were not known to be interested in the arts. Dustin Griffin argues throughout *Literary Patronage in England, 1650-1800* that the patronage system persisted in the eighteenth century as a negotiable, fluid, and political option.[17] Boyd's patterns offer instances of a more integrative approaches to commerce and patronage funding than Griffin's case studies, especially his female examples (Mary Leapor and Charlotte Lennox), provide. Boyd probably never achieved a lucrative arrangement with a single benefactor. Her perpetual anxiety and her eventual criticism of patronage arrangements arose primarily from a difficult balancing act: shifting patrons and political-propagandist networks integrated with various commercial activities and artistic ambitions. The material production and circulation of her texts engaged the favours, advice, and industry of sundry people: well-known and anonymous 'ladies,' paying patrons and trade publishers, and also less splendid and more quirky 'fly-by' contributors, such as the mysterious "Mr. Brewer the Coachmaker," who collected Boyd's mail, or the anonymous "Cook" who approved the curious mingling of her political pamphlets and

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[17] Dustin Griffin, *Literary Patronage in England, 1650-1800* (Cambridge: CUP, 1996).

pork in his or her butcher or pastry shop. Sadly, most of these names (particularly the more 'middling' sort) cannot be recovered as individuals--one thinks especially of Boyd's mother and her seeming importance to her daughter's career choices. The centrality of these now near-anonymous people to her work can be confirmed. Boyd choses not to build a reputation or a public personage in successive texts, but rather to link her works with ongoing remembrances and suggested co-operations: reminders that communities of interest forged the early-modern print marketplace.

The credibility of single-author enquiries has sometimes been called into question, as though sound conceptual thinking applied to 'merely one' is implausible. I am the first to admit that current understanding of Boyd is too tentative to hang heavy arguments on; therefore, what follows in this thesis refuses to force her writings into a single twentieth-century theoretical framework. It seeks rather to take an inventory of her works and to offer annotations and some refurbishment. It also seeks to answer the present call for historical specificity when rethinking gender, public space, and literary career building. By focussing on how one woman interacted with her situation, we can also better understand what circumstances, outside of a few important literary works themselves, could facilitate literary developments--and one woman's living. Elizabeth Boyd was claiming privileges for women--to think, create, argue, and get paid-- rights which were usually denied them. How and why she did this can never be worthless knowledge, nor should feminist inquiry turn its back on the nuances of understanding supplied by any single voice.

Chapter One: Biography of Elizabeth Boyd

For me Untaught, Unletter'd, Plain and Rude,
A Female Pen, amid a Multitude
Elizabeth Boyd, "Glory to the Highest, a Thanksgiving Poem"

If mystery can still surround the details of early childhood or the married years of noblewomen and gentlewomen, such as Mary Wortley Montagu[1] or Judith Madan (Cowper), what secrets can we hope to learn from a social insignificant such as Elizabeth Boyd? If scholarly reconstructions of a professional author renowned in her own time and talked about, restaged, and reprinted after the fact prove unstable--shaped with words like "perhaps" and "possibly" and "kept to the subjunctive",--as Janet Todd recreates Aphra Behn--what hope is there of coming to know the commercial amateur?[2]

Certainly a handful of modern texts comprising early minor women writers bear out the optimistic view that relentless investigation will reward with the minutiae of personhood--a Cambridge brother, some months imprisonment for debt, or passing mention in a memoir--but silence on the part of most institutional records and the small impact that certain commercial authors made on the reading world suggest that these written details may never advance beyond the preliminary. Traditional resources such as private papers and manorial documents are not always helpful, and some blanks can only be roughed in from assiduous research. Yet it is precisely the undocumented (one could say shifty) qualities of an author such as Elizabeth Boyd that make her an interesting

[1] Isobel Grundy, *Lady Mary Wortley Montagu: Comet of the Enlightenment* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999) 5.

[2] Janet Todd, *The Secret Life of Aphra Behn* (London:Pandora, 1996) 6.

study. Her slim life story fits the familiar life patterns of neither fabulous nobles nor precocious cook-maids. She surfed the London literary scene for nearly two decades, engaged the interests of London's most elite, and experimented with every possible genre, and yet somehow she made her long career out of being at once marginal and omnipresent: a rising talent, a charity case, a business woman, an eroticised persona, and a political scourge. Ascending scholarly interest in the highly original, sometimes motley works of this perpetual fly on the wall will surely spawn interest in her personal circumstances and life.

Although Boyd wrote avowedly for the public, petitioned the elite, and ran a business in the thick of London's most fashionable shops and clubs, she worked the city's early print culture as a relatively anonymous individual. Problems may arise for the biographer who has a notion of recovering this individual from an author who is apparently unburdened by a heightened sense of herself, fittingly and capriciously expressed by Boyd in her poem "On Losing the Copy of Shadow, afer reading it to a Lady" where "Shadow" figures her own illusory "thought," "Substance," "Flesh," and "Beauty," which must turn "again to Air" if it cannot "sell" (*HM*, 16-17). The bulk of her career had to be that of a pamphlet-seller and writer of one-shilling compositions, and the woman who had to "humbly beg the Favour" of her "honourable Subscribers . . . to be so very good as to be my Customers" (Advertisement, *FP*) could not afford to be unreservedly autobiographical. Further one suspects that Boyd holds back and heightens details of her lowly origins, political gambles in print, role as suppliant, and always impending insolvency. Therefore, any information garnered about her life from

incremental evidence must be highly speculative.

No documental facts have been proved about Boyd's family or her early life. However, a potential identity for the woman who understood urban opinions, entertainments and the localized political process from her youth is the daughter of Judith and William Boyd, baptised at St Martin-in-the-Fields, Westminster, on June 11, 1710.[3] The same register records William and Judith's marriage as July 31, 1709, which would make Elizabeth the eldest of at least three sisters, the younger girls Anne (1711-1718?)[4] and Judith (b.1713). It is unlikely that Boyd married; she never mentions a husband and her lonely responsibility for her mother is synchronous with the start of her writing career. Unfortunately this specific family cannot be proved as Boyd's because there is at least one other valuable possibility, but proceeding under the assumption of the match yields a reasonable sense of her station and of her early environment.

If the Elizabeth born in 1710 in St Martin-in-the Fields was the writer, she was among the last of the infants baptised at a dilapidated Tudor church at the easterly edge of London's West-End. It had become insufficient to house the swelling number of parishioners who felt the strain of the city's westward expansion and would be rebuilt a decade later with the proceeds of an enormous private subscription.

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[3]A limited one-name study of possible Elizabeths in the London area was undertaken. At first glance, another promising candidate for the author was the daughter of Hugh and Mary Boyd, baptised 27 May 1700, but "St. Martin in the Fields: Burials," Westminster Archives, Westminster, Middlesex records the too early death of Mary Boyd in August 1727. This could not be the writer's mother, who was still living at this time. An Elizabeth Boyd was also born to Robert and Judith Boyd in Leaden Roding, Essex in 1701. There are no further record of this person, although the marriages of several of her brothers are recorded. Given that 'Boyd' is a Scottish name and that a number of babies were baptised by this name in Scotland, the author was very likely of Scottish heritage and was possibly even born in Scotland. D. J. O'Donoghue presents her as an Irish poet, but there is nothing to substantiate this claim. (33) *The Poets of Ireland: a Biographical and Bibliographical Dictionary or Irish Writers of English Verse* (Dublin: H. Figgis, 1912).

[4]"St. Clement Danes Parish Register: Burials 1550-1926," Westminster Archives, Westminster, Middlesex.

It is unclear where the child's family lived the next fifteen or so years of her life. If as Boyd suggests in her poems they were of low social rank, it would have been unusual for them to venture far from the parish of their children's births, and even if they had stayed they may not have made a mark. It is uncertain what impact St Martin-in-the-Fields might have had on their lives; it is unlikely that Elizabeth's father would have been of a social standing that permitted appointment to the parish government, the centre of which was the church, and one suspects that religion did not weigh heavily on Elizabeth's conscience. By the early 1730's, at least, this Boyd family lived very near the church but at the very eastern edge of the parish of St James and nearer to St Anne Soho, than to St. Martin. Hemmed in by French Protestants to the North, Scots Presbyterians to the South, and the whiggish Church of England to the east, Boyd may have formed her latitudinarian principles ("no Religion e'er was meant, / To make Debates, but to prevent" [HM, 24]) partly under the influence of location. As an adult she was content to appreciate the completed St. Martin's newness (*HM*, 6) and may have internalized some of the commonsense, architecturally important, and fashionable air of this truly Georgian structure.[5]

It would be interesting to know how Boyd experienced the constant geographical and emotional proximity of the squalid and the splendid in England's political and cultural centre, if it struck her personally as a girl. (Did she dread service or even the

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[5]John Summerson, "Fifty New Churches and Some Others," *Georgian London* (Pleiades Books: London, 1945) 67-81. George Rudé, "Religion and Churches," *Hanoverian London* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1971) 100-118. This Boyd family does not appear in the *General Register Office: register of births, marriages, and deaths surrendered to the non-parochial registers commissions* (Kew, Richmond: List and Index Society, 1996).

workhouse? Like the child Moll Flanders's cry, "I can't Work house-Work"?) To a child of her station the slums of Clare Market, Seven Dials, and St. Giles, or even more locally, the densely populated, dangerous and impoverished byways, courts and lanes surrounding the Haymarket, the King's Mews and the Strand, probably seemed nightmarishly close.[6] Her youthful poem *Variety* describes Londoners as an impassioned sort, even manic, and spares no one, yet unlike her mature texts is reluctant to criticise specific contrasts between wealth and poverty, leisure and industry: And to a teen-aged Boyd London was a "gay Town," rife with "Confusion," and "Opinion," all in the service of "Fashion" (*V*, Canto II), indicating perhaps that she experienced a level of financial and social comfort in her early years.

It appears that the parents of the Elizabeth who was born in 1710 were married without parental witness, not to say consent, which could indicate their poor status, advanced ages, deceased parents, or simply parental absence from the metropolis.[7] William Boyd seems to have been baptised at St Lawrence Pountney, March 7, 1683 and to have moved with his parents as far west as St. Giles where his sister, also Elizabeth, was born in 1686.[8] Boyd's mother *may* have been baptised Judith Jones, youngest child of Henry and Judith Jones of St. Nicholas Acons, London. Both would have been twenty-six when they married. Given low expectations of lifespan in the early eighteenth

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[6]M. Dorothy George estimates that the population had reached 40, 000 in 1710-11. (410) *London in the Eighteenth Century*, (London: Penguin books, 1925).

[7]Peter Earle, *The Making of the English Middle Class: Business, Society and Family Life in London, 1660-1730* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1989) See, especially, 177-198.

[8]Possibly William belonged to the large Boyd clan of Stepney, London; his brother Hazael was baptised here in here in 1683. Relatives in a then rural suburb may account for Boyd's occasional excursions to "the country."

century, this accords with a young Elizabeth Boyd's acknowledgement in 1732 of an "ancient, indulgent Mother; whom Age, and the Charge of many Children hath render'd incapable of providing for herself." (Preface, *FP*)

Although William Boyd's occupation is unknown, it is doubtful that his financial circumstances recommended him much. It is probable that he was of "lower-middling" status, what Margaret Hunt categorizes as those lower income-earning people with pretensions beneath the gentry but above the labouring classes.[9] Though Boyd would never confirm lowly birth, she would prudently state that he had "long and zealously serv'd the *Stuart* family, in a creditable employ" (*Snail,* 15). Military or naval service comes to mind, and an appointment as a hired tradesmen or a household servant is conceivable, but he was not occupied with anything consequential or sustained enough to be recorded in the Army Lists of 1715 or the household rolls of William or Anne, nor does it seem that his widow received a pension as kin of a captain or ensign.[10] And although Elizabeth Boyd's interest in military and naval engagements and English sea-power is suggestive, it is no guarantee of a relative's martial involvement.[11]

A small post in governmental bureaucracy, such as a clerk or a customs officer, is another possibility as an appropriately low income, reasonably educated niche for the

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[9]Margaret R. Hunt, *The Middling Sort: Commerce, Gender, and the Family in England 1680-1780* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996) 15.

[10]"Cheque Roll in the Reign of king William and Queen Anne" LC 3 61, LS 13 11, PRO, Kew. Information about the Royal Household can be found in Court and Country Register, which only begins in 1746. There is a general gap between 1677 and 1738 in London commercial directories.

[11] A Captain John Boyd and a William Boyd subscribed to *FP*, but I was unable to identify either of these men: there are many individuals with the same names in the London area, and the earliest Army List at Kew begins eight years after the 1732 publication of Boyd's novel.

writing daughter of a financially insecure family, but again this is guess work. It is a point of interest that such strong allegiance to a monarch could be preserved at such a low social rank, especially from the daughter of a man who, if we are to believe Boyd, was seriously wronged by the government at the time of Marlborough's campaigns.

A second, even less verifiable clue about Boyd's father is found in the parish entry of death for Anne Boyd (only potentially Elizabeth's sister), which states that she was the "child of a Taylor."[12] William Boyd may have made clothes to order and done maintenance and repair work for West-End customers. Textiles were, after all, the biggest industry in London and a "creditable" enough, though seasonal, service for fashionable clientele. It is possible that as an author Boyd felt her father's livelihood too low to carry as a recommendation, even though it may well have rested comfortably within Westminster's booming client economy.

Whether he was a civil-servant or petty shopkeeper, a specialist or a distributor, in the service of the affluent customer or of the modest passerby,[13] William Boyd was ultimately unable to benefit his children. He may or may not have enabled his family to grasp momentarily at social consequence or somehow influenced his daughter's artistic or commercial knowhow, but he died, probably, as his eldest daughter reached her teens.

It was by no means uncommon to lose a father before entering one's twenties when the median age at death for Londoners was as low as forty-four, but his early death certainly would have disallowed the accumulation of capital necessary for portions for his

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[12] "St. Clement Danes Parish Register: Burials 1550-1926," Westminster Archives, Westminster, Middlesex lists an Anne Boyd's death in 1733 at St. James's, Piccadilly: an almost illegible, Anne Bo(i)d.

[13] See "Functional Distribution of Shops," in Hoh-Cheung Mui and Lorna H. Mui, *Shops and Shopkeeping in Eighteenth-Century England* (Kingston: McGill-Queens University Press 1989) 46-73.

children, and it could have plunged his wife into a life of intensive work, dependence, or even poverty. Boyd may have put something of her own feelings about her father in the absent, dead and dying fathers of her fiction--"so good, so much a Saint. . . . I've now no Friend to screen me from Disgrace, my Father dead" (*HM, 260).* In her imagination, fathers are more lenient and attentive than contemporary fiction or actual families generally allowed, a fantasy, perhaps, of the male protection and guidance she believed she missed as the surviving members of her family entered into the financially insecure, ideologically ambiguous world of a female-headed household.

Boyd leaves little doubt in appeals to patrons and subscribers of the hardships of her early adulthood. By the time she published her novel in 1732, her father had been dead long enough for her to necessitate a plan to "master those Exigencies of Fortune" which unspecified "ill health" and dependence on an aging and presumably penurious mother brought. If we credit her claim to never have "design'd to indulge . . . inclinations in writing" (Advertisement, *FP)* by entering into print until necessity forced her hand, her father was likely dead some time before her first published attempt in 1726: at a time when she was barely out of childhood.

It is uncertain how well provided for Boyd's mother was, but it was rare for someone of her station to receive a jointure, at least one substantial enough to head a household, without an added income. As *femme sole,* her choices would have been to seek waged labour, provide a service out of her home, or to enter into business, all of which involved complex considerations of expense, station, age and connections, not to mention pride and propriety. It is most likely that she relied on a combination of piece-

rate earnings and perhaps help from relatives or even the parish. It is improbable that she owned a freehold to genteelly accept lodgers or that she stepped easily into the management of a capital-intensive shop.

If she did have saleable skills and some credit and contacts, she may have taken charge of her husband's business or started her own, but assuming a widow's committal to maximize benefits for her children,[14] it is almost certain that a business ultimately failed to raise dowries or to pay apprenticeship fees for her daughters. It appears none of them married (if indeed either of Boyd's sisters even survived), and no shop waited for Elizabeth to continue when she became old enough to contribute to the household.

There is one more intriguing, though highly speculative possibility. For a presumed spinster Boyd had a wealth of practical knowledge of child birthing which opens up the potential of her mother's "Charge of many children"[15] being of more elemental sense than dame or petty schooling: midwifery. The unusual number of images and whole poems that Boyd devotes to paternal absence, the pains of childbirth, mothers who mourn their children, and even unlawful options for those who would not have them, *may* have drawn on a mother (or sister's?) births, or possibly even a female relative's professional experiences of childbirth.[16]

If Boyd lived some of the anxieties of wage-earning with her mother, she may also

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[14]Bridget Hill, *Women, Work, and Sexual Politics in Eighteenth-Century England* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989) 247.

[15]A petty or "English" school was taught as often by unskilled women as business owners and curates and brought in a few supplemental pence per week. See Peter Earle, *The Making of the English Middle Class* 65.

[16]I am indebted to Isobel Grundy (with members of the Orlando Project) for the suggestion of Boyd's anomalous attention to birth issues and process. "Childbirth Encoded: Women give birth and write about it" paper given at the British Eighteenth-and Nineteenth-Century Women Writers conference, Lawrence, Kansas, 16 March, 2002.

have assimilated the feminist potential of independent action, self-reliance and the development of saleable skills. Entrepreneurialism and the art of pleasing were possibly her legacies. Her early formal education may also have fallen to her mother, who she claims was "indulgent" and, presumably, did not actively discourage her daughter's reading and literary experiments but allowed her to write for her "own private amusement" (Advertisement, *FP).* Many children from middling families had obtained literacy by the time Boyd was likely schooled in rudimentary reading and writing, useful skills such as keeping accounts, and perhaps some traditional female accomplishments such as needlework and cookery.[17] If truly impoverished, the child may have been sent to St. Martin-in-the-Fields charity school, though considering the school's goal of inuring beggarly children to low service" Boyd's later achievements would have been all the more remarkable.

The bulk of Boyd's learning was probably her own achievement, though she may be overstating her own efforts and abilities when she imagines of a romance heroine, "she wanted not a Capacity for the most solid Sciences, she search'd, and made them her's with early Care" (*FP*,125). Unlike the erudite women of her generation, Boyd would never become a dedicated scholar; but higher learning, including a basic understanding of Latin epigrams and French phrases, and sundry historical and philosophical texts, and some knowledge of the classics (likely from translation) was probably achieved during her leisure hours: through self-direction and possibly some contrivance. Sometimes she would feel disappointed in a quest for a mentor ("where shall we a Critick gain"[*DS*]), but

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[17]Peter Earle, "The female labour market in London in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries." *Economic History Review*, 2nd ser., XLII, 3 (1989): 333-336.

generally she was content, animated, and righteous (like a second Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle) in her invention of what she missed in or could only half garner from books.[18]

The pleasure Boyd took from the invention of words and from the orchestrating or bending of compositional rules was apparently second only to the heart-felt pleasure she took from attacks on institutional arrogance and exclusionary practices:

> Say, ye triumphing learn'd, what bars the Species? Have we not Souls as rich, and Wills as pregnant? Boasts not our little Island many Ladies of letter'd Merit and judicious learning, that Knowing Worth esteem the Man of Sense, nor are conversant with the Fop of Fancy? (FP, 125)

Recognizing that her heroines of the pen also accomplished what they did outside of formal settings, Boyd was happy to claim an inheritance of female literary achievement. This was likely a conceptual rather than an actual legacy. She did ask women to critique her works in manuscript, but a commendatory poem from "Musidorus from Gray's-In" claims that "She, the Needle's vulgar Task resign[ed]" and by implication was "secluded from her Sex."[19] Creative isolation must have been a sad and unusual condition for a young London writer, the likelihood of which casts a shadow on the conventional language of her only country-retirement poem: "One *Friend*, one dear *Companion* be my *All*."[20]

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[18] Prologue, *DS* addressed to Alexander Pope. Boyd also may have sought advise from John Lockman, John Goddard, and Stephen Poyntz, governor of Prince William.

[19] "To the ingenious Author of the Happy Unfortunate," *FP*.

[20] "On *Solitude*, Writ when in the *Country*," *HM* 30.

Evidence from her early years indicates that Boyd was in a position of fiscal dependence on artists, intellectuals, and writers, always owing for the favour of advice, intermediation, and gifts. Her later professionalism should have limited participation in drawing-room coteries, and so far research has not turned up any evidence that she cultivated a literary correspondence with another writing woman.

If Boyd was restricted early on in her professional networks, she did enjoy the information-sharing, trade-oriented culture of middling literacy. The entertainment districts of Westminster likely provided a grounding in what she would always understand best: cultural consumption. She read, and if finances permitted, may even have attended plays throughout the 1720's,[21] and likely enjoyed chapbooks, pamphlets, and newspapers; and living as a young person in the vicinity of the Haymarket, she must have witnessed the popularity of the ridotto and the Italian soprano, and the lore of the professional gamester. She remained unperturbed by public humours, sport, venality, and even illegality. "A Song: Design'd for the Ridotto. To the Tune of the Tippling Philosophers" offers a paradoxical acceptance of sinful pleasures and a satire of courtly predatoriness masking as manners: "Let Pleasure crown the Night; / be gen'rous and polite, / Ye Sons of Bacchus drink away , / Ye Venus Lasses now be gay" (*HM*, 28). Through all the stylistic and thematic metamorphoses, Boyd's works would remain stable on the point of the entertainment value of art and the artistic value of entertainment. Perhaps this can be attributed to a great deal of freedom in youth to formulate her own interests and independent judgements.

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[21]Fielding's Little Haymarket theatre was nearby, but Boyd speaks more of plays performed at Lincoln's Inn-Fields between 1715 and 1724. Advertisements in the *Daily Courant* list second gallery seats at 1s, 6d.

A general preference for stimulation over moral edification is not as exceptional for a young woman of this time as is her open admission of it; Boyd's singular reading patterns are easy to trace. She side-stepped devotional texts, the prescribed readings of didacts, and conduct-book directives in favour of poems, novels and especially plays, and these she read widely and liberally. Pope, Dryden, and a smattering of Milton and the Bible formed the staid core of her material, but the bulk of it was not only pleasure-oriented but also controversial for being emotive and crowd-pleasing. She unabashedly praised the scandal chronicles of authors long considered profane, and would enter into what she termed the "commendatory War" (*V*, 67) by praising both male and female, canonical and commercial, ancient and modern writers. She read the sanctioned (Prior, Southerne, Chaucer and Shakespeare), but privileged the heroic and sensational (Manley, Haywood, Behn, and Rochester), the recreational (Centlivre, Etherege, Farquhar, Otway, Fenton), and the obscure (John Mottley, John Lockman, William Philips and Charles Beckingham). Evidently she was not much restricted to a course of study but enjoyed reading liberally and broadly.

Though it is unclear why Boyd never married one cannot discount the personal choice of a strong-minded woman with a marketable skill to stay single, but as Bridget Hill explains, choice did not often present itself. Daughters of widows tended to stay at home longer, and factors such as higher female migration to the cities and declining real wages resulted in high rates of celibacy in the eighteenth century and impaired the chances of already impoverished daughters even further.[21]

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[21] See Hill, 221-267 and Olwen Hufton, "Women Without Men: Widows and Spinsters in Britain and France in the Eighteenth Century," *Journal of Family History*, 94 (1984): 362.

An additional bar for marriage for Boyd may have been her unspecified, recurring illness, "from some time past," possibly from her teens or even earlier, a malady which impaired her ability to concentrate and to meet publishers' deadlines. At a very young age she writes, "I am in the first Place, oblig'd to satisfy my honourable Subscribers, why the following Trifle hath been so long delay'd; I am to aquaint them, it was caus'd by a great Indisposition, which still hangs upon me" (Preface, *FP*). It is unclear what persistently inflicted her, or how seriously. She cites privation and worry, and possibly depression also exacerbated or was set off by some physical malady. Diseases of the mind and the body are prominent in her works, and images of fresh and stagnant air recur, rather unremarkably given the often borderline air and water qualities throughout London; though smells from numerous cook-shops around St. Martin and the confined animals smell of the Kings-Mews were likely less enervating than stenches suffered farther east.

Finding herself unmarried, physically weak, and responsible for her ageing mother, Boyd eventually had to realize the bargaining power and saleability of her skill. If her early fictional identity for herself, "Louisa," offers any clue, she first marketed a female writing persona around the time of Princess Louisa's 1724 birth at nearby Leicester House-- premonitory of a writer's lifetime of dependence on the titled and their moods and fortunes and on the political temperaments of public opinion, or in Boyd's own words, she would begin to pay "obsequiously sincere Homage" to the "mighty God of change"(*V,* 73).

In her first published work, a long poem entitled *Variety*, the reckless persona 'Louisa' parodies dedications and encomiums and places her own fate in the hands of

"The Town." As for the author Elizabeth Boyd, she trod softly to seek more elevated patronage ties which would prove neither disastrous nor entirely sustaining. In the 1720's Boyd evidently sought the literary advice of John Campbell, second Duke of Argyll, possibly sending him a juvenilia text, followed up years later with a pointed dedication that resembles a bill of exchange: "Your Grace, when I was very young, was so condescending, as to flatter me into a Writer's Vanity" (Dedication, *FP).* What this amounted to, if anything, is unclear.

There is little doubt that Boyd had much better success with William Stanhope, later [1742] Earl of Harrington. He was made Secretary of the Northern Department (May 1730), and Boyd's first poem to him in this year congratulates him upon his successful return as Joint Ambassador to the Congress of Soissons. The author would replicate this shrewd observance of occasion and promotion with all of her patrons, as it must have succeeded with Harrington, who rewarded her occasional flattery with gifts or introductions throughout the 1730's and into the 1740's. Her mature tribute to him, a persuasive and moving defence of a kindly, ageing, and disillusioned statesman, featured as Biblically and Dryden-inspired Hushai, counsellor of David, implies a sincere admiration and an already-established mutual interest that evidences a personal loyalty that offsets intense desire for political favour on the part of both poet and patron.[22]

A succession of other 'worthies' presented Boyd with one-time gifts, commissioned occasional poetry, and offered critical advice. The benefits Boyd derived

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[22]"Truth, a poem. Address'd to the Right Honourable William Lord Harrington," London, 1740. Harrington "never cordially coalesced with Sir Robert, but made himself acceptable to George II by favouring his German interests." (*DNB,* 929) Boyd's poem consoled Harrington after he suffered a series of slights.

from these people seem to have been through a cumulative, Court-centred interest rather than through individual efforts. Many of her early connections were members of the Royal Household, who steered the topics of her writing through the 1730's. An early patron, William Earl Cowper, was Lord of the Bedchamber. William Anne Van Keppel, newly created 2nd Earl of Albermarle, Lord of the Bedchamber to Frederick, Prince of Wales, was the first-listed subscriber to her novel, and she praises the beauty of his wife, Anne (Lennox), Lady of Bedchamber to Queen Caroline.[23] Other connections may have included George Brudenell, 4th Earl of Cardigan, Page of Honour at the Coronation in 1727, to whom she dedicated *Humorous Miscellany* (1733); the young (pre-Opposition) Lord John Russel, later 4th Duke of Bedford and his bride, Lady Diana Spencer; Stephen Poyntz, governor to Prince William and later privy councillor; Poyntz's wife, Anna-Maria Mordaunt, Maid of Honour to Queen Caroline; Francis North, 3rd Baron Guilford, Gentleman to the Bedchamber to Frederick, Prince of Wales; and Mary Scott, Countess of Delorain.

To one or to a number of these patrons may have fallen the arrangement of a royal presentation in 1730 of Boyd's highly stylized, myth-inspired "Verses, most humbly inscrib'd to his Majesty King George II. On his Birth Day."[24] This event may have "rescue[d] learned Merit from Despair" by increasing profits from the subsequent sale of her poem, or even by securing help with a very impressive novel subscription. As enterprising as Boyd likely was to see through such a large project as a novel by

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[23]Albemarle was a known spendthrift (*DNB* 45). Boyd may have profited from this.

[24]The *Monthly Chronicle* advertised under "Musick, Poetry, and Books of Entertainment" a poem "presented on the Birth-Night, by Elizabeth Boyd," November, 1730.

subscription, she was probably also very lucky to secure the efforts of the "finest Spirits of the Age" (Preface, *FP*). Subscription tickets for the novel *The Happy Unfortunate; or, the Female Page* were sold at coffee-shops and attracted support from Leicester-Fields, St James, Gerrard Street and other westerly squares and streets, but Boyd was probably more indebted to the benevolence and enterprise of her titled contacts who gathered over a hundred names from Court, including ladies-in-waiting, diplomats, and other nobility.[25]

One notable benefactor may have been Frances Seymour, Countess of Hertford, who read the work in manuscript and who may also have acted as an intermediary. Boyd writes, "your *Ladyship* did me the Honour, when you subscrib'd to the *Novel,* to read it in *Manuscript*, and to give me some little Encouragement to proceed; . . . as the last Part of my Book, in a more peculiar Manner, claims a Lady's Patronage" (Dedication Part III, *FP).* The address implies a recent application, so Hertford is also a candidate for Boyd's intermediary to the King in 1730. She was known for her patronage of authors and was in a good position to benefit Boyd, having been Lady of the Bedchamber to Caroline since 1726. Hertford was an unlikely patron in some ways, as she was more disposed to favouring themes of country retirement, friendship and religious reflection than *chronique scandaleuse*. But then she had considerable sway over the final structure and themes of the second and third parts of Boyd's novel, which reads at moments like Hertford's own

[25]A crosscheck of Boyd's subscription list and the Royal Household attending Queen Caroline's funeral procession (1737) proves that the great majority of subscribers were members of the Court or related to members. Nearly all of the Ladies of the Bed-chamber to the Queen and the Princesses, the Queen's Bed-chamber women, including her Dresser, and the King's and Queen's Physicians subscribed. (*GM*, Dec 1737)

version of "The Story of Inkle and Yarico."[26]

It is difficult to say at what point Boyd became far-sighted enough in her authorship to plan a synchronous career in writing and trade, one alternatively carrying the financial burdens of the other. But probably after 1730 she came to realize that even the support of the elite could only be supplemental and copyright payments from publishers were too insubstantial for any kind of a living. She recognized the poverty that writing to order would cause her, affectionately scolding her collection of poetry with it hollow pleasures: "were I but by thy slight *Income* fed!"(*HM,* 16) Accordingly she turned her attentions to the stationery and pamphlet-selling trades, for which she would need substantial start-up funds.

When after some delay the novel *The Happy-Unfortunate or The Female-Page* emerged in 1732, it became an early and strikingly successful example of subscription publication aimed at facilitating an author's move into another employment.[27] This publication was a twofold business venture necessary to gather sufficient funds for stock and minimal shop-fittings and to capture customers from among her subscribers. The project possibly had included the collateral benefit of allowing Boyd to take up lodgings at a more desirable location near Leicester Square.[28] Four hundred and eleven people

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[26]So far there is no known extant correspondence between Boyd and Frances Hertford. Colin Shrimpton, representative of The Northumberland Estates, letter to the author, 26 January, 1999 and Sarah Prescott, e-mail to the author, 4 April, 2000.

[27]Cheryl Turner's list of subscription publications would suggest that Mary Davys is the only confirmed author before Boyd to publish a novel by subscription.

[28]Previously she lived shoddily enough to have to provide West-Saxon Coffee-House in Charing-Cross and the German Coffee-House in St. James as addresses. But her use of alternative addresses may imply placement of her wares in the circuit of trade and social movement, literally, for example, in the case of the advertisement "send . . . viz to Elizabeth Boyd, at Mr Wylder Coach-Maker, in Brewers-Street, by Golden Square" ("Proposals for printing a novel" London, 1732).

(plus "Fifty Names more which I have not Leave to insert"), or four hundred and twenty nine copies, should have brought in just over two hundred pounds before production costs. This would have been enough to settle any debts Boyd and her family may have incurred and to set up a modest pamphlet and stationery shop at the easterly edge of the parish of St James.[29]

When Boyd set about the business of pamphlet-selling in 1732 the trade was still under represented by women, though no doubt it appealed to her as an artist.[30] After thanking her subscribers, "whose Goodness has, in so genteel, and conspicuous a Manner rais'd me from almost the lowest Condition of Fortune, and a worse State of Health" (Preface, *FP*), Boyd advertised her location in "George-Court, in Prince's-Street, near Leicester-Fields, the first House on the Right Hand." George Court was probably not a slum, unlike many of the twisted and ruinous courts and alleys that were hastily put up behind throughfares during the eighteenth century. It was a narrow and short passage, no more than twenty-five metres in length. But it connected the south end of respectable Rupert Street, described by Strype in 1720 as "a pretty, handsome, well built street," with the recently rebuilt residential Prince's Street (now Wardour), which may have shown early signs of commercialization by the 1730's.[31]

Constant clamour from a market and taverns, freak shows, and nightlife to the

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[29]Peter Earle estimates that by 1747 at least one hundred pounds was needed to start any sort of business, five hundred to set up as a bookseller. *The Making of the English Middle Class.*

[30]Hunt's compilation of women policyholders of Sun Fire and Royal Exchange insurance estimate 4.4 percent of booksellers were women and 6.7 percent of stationers were women from 1775-1787, though numbers may have been higher earlier in the century when shops were less specialized and set-up costs less expensive. (*The Middling Sort*, 133) Note the difference of opinion with Collyer, which may suggest that women were not insuring their businesses.

[31]John Strype, *A Survey of the Cities of London and Westminster,* 1720.

south, may have worn already fragile nerves; Boyd, not often given to pastoral flights of fancy, began to fantasize about soothing rural sounds and tastes, far "from noisy courts, and peopl'd roads."[32] But the location was respectable enough to entice neighbouring customers, probably including residents of Leicester-Square, which Strype claims was "a very handsome large square, enclosed with rails and graced on all sides with good built houses, well inhabited and resorted to by gentry," that acted as a hub for surrounding businesses and was usefully recognizable as a landmark and as a good address.

At this corner house overlooking Prince's street, Elizabeth, her mother and possibly one or more of her siblings may have leased the bottom or first two floors from a landlord or from the holder of a long lease and set up shop on the ground floor where she could sell "paper, pens, Ink, Wax, Wafers, black Lead pencils, Pocket Books, Almanacks, Plays, Pamphlets, and all manner of Stationary goods"(Advertisement, *FP*). One common arrangement early in the century was a shop enclosed with glazed windows which displayed goods and advertised (as Letitia Pilkington did her scribal services and Boyd may have her poems). This would include a living space often consisting of a parlour and kitchen. For an arrangement like this, Pilkington paid twenty-one pounds per annum.[33] It is doubtful that the Boyds had the luxury of the entire house to themselves or could afford much in the way of shop fittings for the comfort of customers, such as the high-end "painting and guilding, fine shelves, shutters, boxes, glass-doors, sashes" bought

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[32]"On Solitude. Writ When in the Country," *HM 30.*

[33] Letitia Pilkington, *Memoirs of Mrs Letitia Pilkington 1712-1750, Written by Herself.* (London: George Routledge and Sons, Ltd., 1928) 283.

at prices Defoe thought ruinous.[34] But she lived here, presumably in comfort, for eight years.

As for the trade of pamphlet-selling itself, Joseph Collyer may have underestimated the learning, taste, and élan required to sustain a successful enterprise when he wrote, "This business is principally carried on by women . . . . It is easily learnt and requires no abilities but writing, accounts and an obliging behaviour."[35] Contrariwise Boyd articulates her problems as particular to female merchants working the bottom end of a retail business. Principally she may have faced sexual harassment and petty bargaining. Pilkington claims that her presence would embolden men of quality to patronize literary tastes and criticize appraisals and prices, while the lower sort ("mechanicks," packers, carriers, servants) insulted and harassed. According to Pilkington's shop annals certain gentlemen found it difficult to distinguish between the female trader and the familiar victualler or inn-keeper; it seems female merchants were frequently hit up for refreshments and familiar conversation by men who had no intention of buying.

Unlike most petty traders, however, Pilkington and Boyd had the weapon of print to expose perpetrators; see Boyd's defamatory "Verses on Capt. D—s. [Dives?], who after subscribing to a certain Pamphlet, and keeping it upwards of nine Months, both refused to pay for it, and returned it Unsalable." This is a teeth-gnashing piece, clearly written with the intent of emasculating an enemy and destroying his credit. She

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[34] Daniel Defoe, *The Complete English Tradesman* (London, 1726).

[35] Collyer, Joseph, *Parents and Guardians Directory and the Youth's Guide in the Choice of a Profession or Trade* (London, 1761).

harangues, "Disgrace attends you, to your Dying day. / *Vain* mean soul'd *Fop,* poorly to wrong a Woman, / And glory in't because the Fraud is common." (*HM*, 20)

However tough Boyd had to be to stay afloat, it seems that she was secure or busy enough in her trade to forgo publishing for a time (1733-1737), and possibly to accumulate enough profit to correct her dependence on publishers when she did resume writing. It is not far-fetched to postulate that Boyd's silence is attributable to pseudonymous or anonymous publication for the government. Early in her career she sold copyrights to an array of book-seller- publishers who sometimes then spread out the venture, presumably to defray costs and legal risks. Except perhaps for the powerful conger of J. Applebye, Elizabeth Nutt, E. Cook, M[ary?] Bartlett, and Anne Dodd, the majority of her publishers were as modest and as necessarily diversified as she was with fringe occupations.[36] Most of them were interested in "useful literature," "satires," "voyages," and other ephemeral publications.

Although it seems as though Boyd never dealt with truly unscrupulous people, there is some evidence that she was often concerned about quality control. In 1727 she wrote, "There are some Faults in the Poem, of which you are desired to acquit the Poetess, it being occasion'd thro' my Absence from the Press"(*V*, 74). More seriously she

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[36]Henry R. Plomer, *A Dictionary of the Booksellers who were at Work in England, Scotland, and Ireland from 1668-1725,* ed. Arundeel Esdaile (London: London Bibliographical Society, 1922) 7, 58, 75, 184. In addition to trade-related ventures, such as book-binding or compiling catalogues for libraries, William Lewis, for example, advertised, among other necessaries, "the strengthening and comforting stomach plaister, for coughs" (*ESTC*), sold from his shop. Charles Corbett, though a more important trader, acted as an auctioneer of furniture. Both publishers of Boyd's works advertised in the *Daily Journal.* Lewis was Pope's publisher from 1709-27.

sometimes felt coerced by publishers' deadlines and demanded output.[37] Moreover, early in her career desperation, and odd gifts from patrons, may have made her more amenable to letting works go cheaply; Thomas Edlin, for one, was happy to purchase copyright to her occasional poetry, before she entered trade and broke with him after 1732.[38] It could be claimed that Boyd's publishing career saw three stages of production. The first involved direct sale of copyright, the second subscription publication, and the third self-publication.

Seemingly something untoward took place in the writer's personal or business life late in the 1730's that demanded her revived literary efforts, a relocation, and an overhaul of publisher negotiations. From her home in Grosvenor Mews in 1737, situated in the Grosvenor Street ward,[39] she began to write again and made a bid unusual for a woman to ingratiate herself with Walpole's government, perhaps hoping to be paid with secret-service money.[40] Given that she subsequently rode the tide of anti-Hanoverian public opinion by penning opposition (Patriot) pamphlets during moments of national crisis, she

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[37]Fluctuations in quality and tone throughout *HM* and Boyd's anxious jest, "The *Bookseller*, I've cheated him will swear" (16), suggest that miscellanies publisher S. Slow may have exerted pressure on her to write poems to order, possibly the riddles and court intrigues which he was known to sell.

[38]His disappearance from her title-pages may not represent a falling-out; he was busy in the early 1730's with a slander war against a Reverend Thomas Stackhouse of Middlesex, ESTC .

[39]Grosvenor Mews was between Grosvenor Street and Berkeley Square, to the west of New Bond Street and to the east of Davies. Nothing about Boyd's residence at this time can be verified. The minute books for the Grosvenor Estate only start in 1789, and there are no surviving deeds or leases for Grosvenor Mews earlier than 1826. The scavengers'rates for Charing Cross and St. Martin's parish do not list any Boyds. The 1733 poor rate books for the Grosvenor, Conduit, and Dover Street wards do not even list the Mews (for reasons unknown). Alison Kenney, letter to the author, 30 April, 2002.

[40]Boyd sent Walpole "The Vision or the Royal Mourners; A Poem to the Sacred Memory of her Late Majesty, Queen Caroline," bundle 73, item 37a MS., Cholmondeley (Houghton) Papers, U of Cambridge, Cambridge. Tone Sundt Urstad, *Sir Robert Walpole's Poets: The Use of Literature as Pro-Government Propaganda, 1721-1742.* (Newark: U of Delaware P, 1999) 57; Tone Sundt Urstad, e-mail to the author, 15 March, 2001.

presumably was rejected.

Politics always figure in Boyd's works, yet her 'real' political sympathies are difficult to peg.[41] Working from the epicentre of national politics and localized agitation about issues of trade, empire, and war, she was enticed by controversy and propaganda in a much more sustained way than any of her female contemporaries. As a young woman she published satire on Walpole, the "Mungrel Physician," (*V,* 6) even before it was current coin. She also attempted to secure sales by exposing court intrigues, which often involved her Whig benefactors, and sometimes would even play for both sides of a given issue, alternately and simultaneously. As a young woman she became responsive to oral and written propaganda, as the city began to buzz with the government-subsidized enthusiasm for the Hanoverian and Whig cause, and she later pushed hard for permission to write in support of the Court and Ministerial policy. In her later years, however, her opinions became more fiery and divisive, and certainly more socially concerned. Though the majority of her works see her as a Whig, or later as a "Whig out of place," she was always opportunistic and very much available for hire. In this regard, Boyd's career as propagandist seems a unique adaptation of the comparatively candid allegiances of the politic-minded celebrities of her childhood, Manley and Centlivre: it is to them that she attributes her early literary inclinations, as she (more secretly) may have her political drift.[42]

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[41] John, Lord Hervey, *Some Materials Towards Memoirs of the Reign of King Gerge II,* vol. 1 Ed. Romney Sedgwick (New York: AMS Press, Inc., 1970) 4.

[42] Political posturing in some of Boyd's works makes it impossible to rule out an old family allegiance: sometimes her topics border on the politically perverse. She sees it fit to actuate the romantic potential of certain Tory leaders and Highlander rebels and offer a fantasy of the mutilation of Lord Anglesey, who reputedly sold his nephew into slavery for his fortune ("Altamira's Ghost"). In 1745 she writes of this

Throughout her life Boyd wrote to a wildly varied audience. She was drawn to powerful men, she wrote of women's political involvement, and there is little doubt that she felt as a proto-feminist. Vengeance and truth-telling in her poems consistently assume the form and voice of woman. Not only the opinion but also the justice-wielding force behind the author's views is a female: she is sometimes figurative and conventional and sometimes ethereal--angel, spirit, goddess, or divine music--but she is never a mere muse.

Boyd's entrepreneurial projects were also born out of the support of women. Some time after 1736 she became a member of the Shakespeare's Ladies Club, who made some charitable efforts and steered audience tastes and lobbied for plays in the early 1740's. But for Boyd, all of the members were powerful and titled, though the author may have shared their good connections in common: she cast her social net wide, and over her writing lifetime her patronage ties formed an intricate web rather than a lucky and sustained attachment to one or two powerful individuals.[43]

The directness of Boyd's appeals from women to both men and women became all the more exceptional as she neared what may have been the end of her career in the 1740's, and felt that she had to contort emerging 'domestic' genres into forums for direct

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wronged nephew, James, as "Jemmy," prefacing her poem with the wish that "the impartial Just . . . from Clans of Figure to the low Plebeian, rejoice the Frauds detected, and wish with me to see the noble Slave enjoy his lawful Right"--peculiar words for a Hanoverian.

[43] Her novel lists subscriptions from many women who can be connected directly or indirectly to the Club. A young Boyd wrote a birthday poem for William, 2nd Earl Cowper, which also compliments his sisters, Anne and Sarah. One or all three of them may have helped her gather support for her novel, to which they subscribed, and later they may have recommended her to their niece by marriage, Mary Cowper, an ardent SLC member. See Chapters three and four for discussion of the Cowpers. It is probable that Boyd's membership came out of multiple and accumulated connections, some recorded in the subscriptions, others anonymous, as it seems the SLC was composed of nieces, daughters, and daughters-in-law of a previous generation of literary patrons.

confrontation. It is likely that she attempted to corner a market with a serial publication, her 1744 periodical, *The Snail: or the Lady's Lucubrations*. It undoubtedly fell flat when her readers balanced her stated purpose, "to be an Amusement to the Fair Sex," against her actual intention: a diatribe against the Marlboroughs and a detailed disclosure of the horrors of naval battles with France and Spain. Despite elaborate framing devices of didacticism, diversions, and purported visits from "ladies" and correspondents, it is a throwback to party-oriented harangues, press-politics, and national concerns of an earlier age.

Clues about Boyd's final years of publication offer contradictory indicators about her physical, social and economic well-being: evidence points to potential social betterment but also to literary ebbing and failing health. Boyd's only play, the whimsical ballad-opera, *Don Sancho Or, the Student's Whim* (1739), seems to have come out of her membership with the prestigious SLC, her involvement with which would seem to indicate increased leisure time and perhaps even prestige.[44] The work is sardonic, however, about poets who are "starv'd to death and buried by the Parish."[45] The periodical, *The Snail*, also suggests that Boyd may have been unsuccessful at adapting to a changing market place in which partisan and patronage relations played a progressively smaller role. She may have begun to experience financial troubles once again, and it is

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[44]The contents of Boyd's novel may have come back to haunt her around this time, as it was reissued and sold by Olive Payne in 1737. The issue is identical to Edlin's, apart from the omission of "the female-page" in the title and the additions of new red and black titlepage and the sale's pitch, "relating to some person's of distinction" and "By the ingenious Mrs. Elizabeth Boyd." She apologizes for the romance in the Prologue to her play.

[45]It is presumed that this opera was never staged, but Boyd sold tickets from her shop for "a new Ballad-Opera," author unknown, performed at Haymarket Theatre, 6:30, Wednesday 16, 1742. *The London Stage*.

certain she was quite ill, possibly too ill to acclimatize to changes on the writing scene.

A sudden change in publishing patterns likewise precludes any definite statements about Boyd's later career success. After 1737 her publications often read, "London printed, and sold by the author," though sometimes in partnership with one or more book-sellers. Charles Corbett, for one, may have helped Boyd manage her more sensitive materials after 1739, as he had Eliza Haywood's polemics by selling her works from his shop and settling accounts at the end of a given term.[46] While self-financed publication would have given Boyd more control over her own output, a loss or two could have proved disastrous if she was footing the bill.[47] This system could indicate that she actually had accumulated enough capital to control the costs of production and sales of her own works, but it could also suggest that publishers were wary of shouldering responsibility for her suddenly topical works. Cheryl Turner notes this equivocality when she suggests that self-financing reflects "either desperation or considerable faith in saleability."[48]

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[46]Corbett published *British Magazine* after 1746, which does not refer to Boyd. "Glory to the highest, a thanksgiving poem, on the late victory at Dettingen" was printed by "Thomas Coopper" (Cowper), who published a great deal of pamphlet literature; he was likely willing to publish Boyd's political poetry.

[47]A ledger of printer Henry Woodfall the younger records transactions with Boyd, to whom he sold five hundred copies of "Altimira's Ghost" for £1 11s 6d, which she met successfully in three instalments. Presumably they sold, but her ventures were, still, speculative. P.T.P, "The Ledgers of Henry Woodfall,1737-1748," *Notes and Queries* (Sept. 22, 1855): 217-219. Woodfall was known for his reasonable rates.

[48]Cheryl Turner, *Living by the Pen: Women Writers in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Routledge, 1994) 113. Boyd was determined not only to gain control of copyright but also to sell her own works from her shop. Something that she tested at least once was to have publishers share a venture and then, presumably, buy back copyright and reissue the work at her own expense. (Another possibility is that she mortgaged the copyrights in exchange for initial cost.) This seems to have been an unusual tactic in the publishing world at this time. In one case, J. Applebee, C. Corbett, E. Nutt, E. Cook, M. Barlett, and A. Dodd published "Admiral Haddock: or, the progress of Spain" anonymously in February of 1740, and Boyd reissued it that same year. C. Corbett seems to have swayed her projects in the early 1740's, publishing works of Boyd's that he printed, but also selling ventures she shared with other publishers from his own shop. He and Boyd jointly published "Truth, a poem," possibly sold by the aforementioned group ("the pamphlet shops of

Although Boyd's geographical movement westwards towards the end of the 1730's is entirely explicable, it also offers little indication of her rise or fall in reputation and station. She moved at least three times between 1732 and 1740, probably selecting each location for its proximity to a fashionable square: Leicester, Berkley, and finally Golden. Her movement away from Leicester Fields (George Court) to Grosvenor Mews was imperative as the former had deteriorated rapidly by the mid century, to the point where one observer came to pity the straggling gentry: "Leicester-Square has nothing remarkable in it, but the inclosure in the middle, which alone affords the inhabitants round it, something like the prospect of a garden, and preserves it from the rudeness of the populace too."[49] There was probably a mean customer base as the gentry moved west and the competition may have built up too quickly.[50]

By 1740 she had moved from Grosvenor Mews and was advertising that her pamphlets and stationery would be sold temporarily from a "cook's shop, the sign of the Leg of Pork and Sausages, in Leicester-street, by Swallow-street, St. James." (*Foxon*) Here it seems that she and another business owner subdivided until she could find a more permanent location on the same street later that year: at a "new pamphlet shop over-against the Crooked-Billet in Leicester-street, near Burlington-gardens."[51] It was a

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London and Westminster"), under the name E----. B----. Again, Boyd reissued the work, this time by E. Boyd.

[49]*A Critical Review of the Publick Buildings, statues and Ornaments In, and Bout London and Westminster. The Dimensions of St. Peter's Church at Rome, and St. Paul's Cathedral at London.* (London, 1734).

[50]She had at least on competitor, one Mr. Harbin, stationer, at the Sign of the Crown in the Strand, near Charing Cross who advertised throughout the *Daily Journal*.

[51]Leicester Street was very near Savill Row and Swallow Street, both of which had many fashionable residences. Boyd always advertises her shop as being located "near" a square or some other lucrative customer base.

business tactic of Boyd's to advertise this shop as "new" for three more years. It is tempting to see Boyd's geographical movement westwards to join more fashionable shops as a rise in status.[52] It is likely, however, she could only afford to set up in the northern vicinity, where the streets were narrow, houses inferior, and only the trading part of the community resorted.[53] In humble Leicester Street, she probably felt dwarfed by the better shops along St. James's and Old Bond Street, where shop-keepers could afford elegant fixings for their quality customers and could lock-up at night to return to their families and separate residences, as they were increasingly wont to do.

When Boyd advertised for subscriptions for her last work *The Snail* in 1740 she was still living in Leicester Street.[54] When the journal finally appeared in 1745 she had given up shop-keeping and been living in "Vine Street, near St. James's-Church" for at least a year. She had pushed through a lengthy illness to finish this final publication from her private rooms, so among her final words to the public is a weary apology for the delayed publication, which "Intention hath been long frustrated by the Authoress's unhappy State of Heath, join'd to a Scene of complicated Misfortunes"("To the Town," *Snail*).

It is entirely possible that Boyd sold her stationery stock for a reasonable profit

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[52]Boyd's tactic may have been to get as close as she could to St. James's Square without paying the exorbitant rent. Pilkington had written that there was "no place so proper for my purpose as St. James's Street, where I should be in the centre of my noble benefactors" (*Memoirs*, 482).

[53]Strype felt the area "meanly built" and its inhabitants "not much to be boasted of." See M. H. Port, "West End Palaces: The Aristocratic Town House in London 1730-1830," *The London Journal* Vol 20.1 (1995): 17-47.

[54]"Advertisement," "Truth a Poem," (1740). In addition to *The Snail,* Boyd advertises "Pamphlets and Stationary [sic] &c sold by the Author, who humbly hopes that those of her subscribers who are not already engaged, will be so good as to be her customers, whom all possible Carè shall be taken to oblige."

and soon removed to the country, but it is at least equally likely that bad health finally overwhelmed her and she died.[55] Her last work contains a sad memorial for what we know of the author herself, though in the voice of her persona Eugenia, "a Lady at St. James," writing to her "Friend at Dover":

> Such are all Court Dependants, Friend believe me, who wanting Fortunes to supply their Birth, Necessity obliges to be servile; whose nobler Souls disdain the slavish Tye, and hope and toil for happier high-born Freedom, tow'ring beyond their Destiny till Death perhaps, cuts short the Aspirer's lofty Views, whose aim'd at Glories set in the dark Grave, leaving the yet Surviving this Memento, Life is a Bubble full of Trouble, ever pointing to vast Promontories, hard of Access, if ever to be climb'd. (*Snail*, 26)

One of Boyd's favoured motifs is the female ghost who is cunning, adaptive, lyrically sad, fiercely indignant, and always protective of her family. She is as curious and compelling as Boyd and her peculiar writings--never found in a single locatable place or body but always ubiquitous and poised for controversy.

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[55]There is nothing in PROB 11/919/214, Middlesex, PCC Wills, to link an Elizabeth Boyd of Saint Matthew, Bethnal Green, to the poet Boyd, and "Burials St Matthew, 1765-1767, LMA X025/020" turns up negative, possibly because severe over-crowding here after 1740 resulted in the use of private burial grounds, according to Daniel Lysons, *The Environs of London,* (London, 1796). Likely this Elizabeth, whose will was proved in 1766, was of the Boyd family of nearby Stepney.

Chapter Two: *Variety* and the "juvenile Muse"

Variety is the soul of pleasure.
Aphra Behn, *The Rover*

Such Hatred to a Parson's Gown,
The Sight will put her in a Swoon
She calls it witty to be rude;
And, placing Raillery in Railing
Will tell you aloud your greatest Failing.
J. Swift, *The Furniture of a Woman's Mind.*

Some women writers of the long eighteenth century debuted with inflammatory publications. The majority of these works were catapulted into print as responses to anti-feminist publications, as was Judith Drake's *Essay in Defence of the Female Sex* (1696), or more notably Sarah (Fyge) Egerton's *The Female Advocate,* for which the author was banished to the country at sixteen by her father who was quite unamused by his daughter's satiric bent. Altogether more often women entered the publishing world discreetly with poetical miscellanies, or if they were disinclined to take Dryden's advice, that women "Write with more Softness than Strength," they would publish plays and political tracts anonymously, at least at the outset.[1]

Impressively enough, though certainly not unprecedented, Elizabeth Boyd may have been as young as seventeen when she decided to test the London literary scene in 1727 with her pseudonymous name "Louisa" or, alternately on a romantic whim, "Lovisa," as it appears on the titlepage of her first published work, seemingly with a form of letter less typical of print that of inscriptions in Latin. By choice, it seems, Boyd would select a challenging genre, for under this name she published the long poem *Variety: a poem, in two*

[1]Advice to Elizabeth Thomas from Dryden in a letter written shortly before his death in 1700. *Letters of John Dryden*, ed. Charles F. Ward (New York: AMS Press, 1965) 125.

cantos. Humbly offer'd to the god of change.[2] Previously she had written for her own entertainment and may have circulated her works among family and friends. Once she had even bravely sued for literary advice from the formidable Whig of Scotland, John Campbell, 2nd Duke of Argyll, who evidently responded with more kindness than he was in the habit of showing his own daughters.[3] Given Boyd's whimsical style of writing and her peculiar selection of topics, it is unsurprising that she would introduce herself to the wider reading world with something entirely more bold than pastorals, religious meditations, or compliments to a Lord. Even in the context of the riotous press of 1720's, her first publication would be generically challenging and in many ways unparalleled-- if not somewhat eccentric.

It is awkward to introduce the first and maybe the most sophisticated and important work of a writer with an admission that her poem is too intricate to summarize for themes. *Variety* is, though, a very long poem, comprising eighty-seven pages, two compressed and mischievous cantos, and two appendaged imitations of classical forms. There are few subdivisions and headings to organize this mass. Thematically, in so far as distinct topics can be pinpointed, it mocks *and* celebrates politics, personalities, literature, money, manners and public entertainments. It is compelling for its very confusion and intriguing as a voluminous piece of party-political writing which evokes but ultimately refuses to either

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[2] *Variety. A Poem in Two Cantos Humbly offer'd to the God of Change. To which is annex'd An Answer to an Ovid's Epistle.* By Lovisa, Westminster Printed for T. Warner at the Black Boy in Pater-noster Row, and B. Creake in Jermyn-street, St. James's, 1727. The work was advertised in November 1726 in *Monthly Catalogue.* The copyright to *Variety* with 300 books were sold at a trade sale of B. Creake, April 21, 1727, to John Osborn of Horsley Downs. It was certainly completed before June 1727 (the month of George I's death).

[3] *DNB* characterizes Argyll as a man who would pursue his enemies with great "pertinacity" (821-5); Boyd seems wary of offending him with her dedication of the *FP*: "I dare to flatter myself, that your Grace's known Indulgence, will pardon the liberty I have taken," but he had "flatter[ed] her into a Writer's Vanity," and the theme of love "rarely offends the truly Great" (Dedication, part I). Isobel Grundy writes, "He was a heavy father, whose four daughters were mostly silent in his presence" (*Lady Mary Wortley Montagu,* 327).

denounce or smile on the presumed "inconstancy," "change," or "confusion" of Court, political faction, or national myth. An amoral stance and such a difficult satiric form are very peculiar choices for a young writer. At moments Boyd acknowledges the uncontrolled work threatens to implode, or drawing on her own metaphor, to pull itself under beneath its swirling eddies.

The following chapter will attempt to tackle the multiple generic and political contexts in which this work was written, its innovative form, and its surfeit of unstable opinions, particularly its response to the canonizing of certain authors and literary styles. To accomplish this, it will begin by exploring the multistyled techniques that Boyd employs as part of the Menippean tradition of satirical writing. This was an unusual choice for a woman writer, except where she wished to hint at the inexpressible–comment on the inviolable values of politics and "gentlemanly" behaviours. Next, it will argue that Boyd's textual exchange of derisive politics for financial support is a stratagem for projecting aesthetic and political obligations onto the "Town," and so relinquishing any responsibility that might bring personal trouble. And, ultimately, it will explore Boyd's willingness to tackle political discourse in the many voices of London women. Here, for the first time, Boyd ponders her uncertain status and future in the literary marketplace and her maternal literary inheritance. *Variety* establishes an early critique of Walpole and Court, which claims political knowledge and resistance before the founding of any organized opposition, and this early criticism is the express opinion of a self-fashioned and trend-setting woman author, possibly nearly a girl.

Variety and the Menippean Tradition

Like many of the party-political writings by Restoration and early eighteenth-century

writers, *Variety* is a self-declared political satire and a product of specific political-historical events. It is neither sycophantic nor reactionary but sits on the fence, as Boyd was neither a "purchased" and subsidised writer, nor (as yet) unambiguously a Whig or an opposition writer, though she would write as each in succeeding years. Instead, *Variety* incorporates (or facetiously parrots) indulgent Horatian commentary and Juvenalian indignation, but the provoking, rambling and amoral qualities of the aptly-named poem mark it as Menippean: the most perplexing of classical satirical modes for its refusal to explore or resolve topics or to adhere to moral precepts.[4]

Successive dialogues, invectives, lists, and rhetorical flights in the poem mimic the positions that they momentarily assume. Poetic speakers, ranging from a self-satirical author to flippant society women to fops and to impassioned gods, are at times playful and other times scathing. Sometimes they provoke dialogue, but more often than not they leave questions unresolved. Satiric targets are migratory and often obscure, but they also often look much like exemplars and vice versa. There are few moral centres in such a poem. There is, however, an abundance of ridicule, facetiousness, and (oddly for party-political writing) rejoicing.

Although modern critical attention to the eighteenth-century Menippean tradition confines itself primarily to select works by Dryden and Swift and to later novels, such as

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[4] For further studies of the Menippean tradition see A. Bartlett Giamatti, "Proteus Unbound: Some Versions of the Sea God in the Renaissance," *The Disciplines of Criticism: Essays in Literary Theory, Interpretation, and History,* ed, Peter Demetz (New Haven: New York UP, 1968); A. B. Chambers, "Milton's Proteus and Satan's Visit to the Sun," *Journal of English and German Philology* 62 (1963): 280-287. Juanita S. Williams, "Towards a Definition of a Menippean Satire," diss., Ann Arbor, 1966; David J. Rothman, "Hudibras and Menippean Satire," *Eighteenth-Century Theory and Interpretation* 34.1 (1993): 23-44; Kirk Combe, "Shadwell and Lord of Misrule: Dryden, Varronian Satire and Carnival," *Eighteenth-Century Life* 24.3 (2000): 1-18; Kevin Cole, "Levities Rainbow: Menippean Poetics in Swift, Fielding and Sterne," diss., Baye U, 1999; Robert M Philmus, "Mechanical Operations of the Spirit and *A Tale of a Tub,*" *English Studies in Canada* 10.4 (1984): 391-406.

Tristram Shandy, the form's ambiguities and hybridities were also adaptable to contentious early-century political and topical pamphlets and tracts. As Boyd was aware from her early reading, seventeenth-century women political writers had employed elaborate tropes to advance ideas of political cohesion and stability. When social and political status was dependent upon pleasing popular tastes, as was the case with openly market-based texts of Walpolean England, many authors made the decision to filter potentially offensive or even treasonous comment. They did this by multiplying cultural positions, or self-referential representations of the writer's exigencies and evocations of multiple "currencies" of cultural exchange.[5] Boyd acknowledges specifically two practitioners of this in *Variety*, Delarivier Manley and Aphra Behn; for they had won reading audiences for popular periodicals and pamphlets that resist precise categorisation because of their authors' efforts to reach wide audiences but also to avoid prosecution.[6] Boyd aims at similar political writing in which retreat and moral platitude are replaced with saleable, inflammatory but politically inculpable and untraceable forms and contents.

As an unpublished and unknown writer, Boyd realized early on that she must meet the demands of a market fuelled by unpredictable preferences for certain genres. She describes how the structural and thematic amalgams of her poem will help her meet this

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[5]Carol Barash, *English Women's Poetry 1649-1714: Politics, Community and Linguistic Authority* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996) considers pastoral retreat, friendship, and eroticism as figures for political conflict in the poetry of Katherine Philips, Aemilia Lanyer, Aphra Behn, and Anne Finch. Also see Aaron Santesso, "The *New Atlantis* and Varronian Satire," *Philological Quarterly* 79.2 (2000): 177-204.

[6]Catherine Ingrassia, "The (gender) politics of the literary marketplace," *Authorship, Commerce, and Gender In early 18th-Century England: A Culture of Paper Credit* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998) 104-127; Paula Backschieder, "The Story of Eliza Haywood's Novels: Caveats and Questions," *The Passionate Fictions of Eliza Haywood: Essays on Her Life and Works*, ed. Kirsten T. Saxton and Rebecca Bocchaccihio (Lexington: U of Kentucky Press, 2000).

demand:

> All change, all vary swift as Rainbow sky,
> Legibly writ in the Camelion's Dye;
> Just Hieroglyphic,–what Egyptian Pore,
> Minutur'd in small, compriz'd such Store;
> Concise and bright are Characters so rare,
> VARIETY'S the Beauty of the Air:
> Name me but one extatic Charm on Earth,
> And say VARIETY got not the Birth. (17)

To accommodate her wide audience, Boyd incorporates a range of personae and topics, snippets of gossip, hints of Court scandal, personal letters, self-dramatising techniques, romantic tropes, comic dialogue, moral reflections, and political and topical satire, many of which (as the passage above suggests) tease with word play and a "Store" of potential meanings. The Menippean satirist had the advantage of an intellectual excursion, and his or her freedom from moral stance or even logical argument was as amenable to the fluidity as it was to the hazard of the literary market.[7]

Unprecedented political involvement, increases in literacy, expansions in the press, and cross-class interests in public entertainments early in the century also guaranteed a market for topically and structurally hybridised texts which were unconcerned with traditional forms. And many early eighteenth-century women writers were especially well situated to experiment with these (non)structures because they were ill-prepared or merely

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[7]The term "Hieroglyphic" had long referred to the allegorical transactions between fact, fiction, and history. Consider Aphra Behn's *Love Letters between a Nobleman and his Sister*, ed. Janet Tod (London: Penguin, 1993). The historian and magician Fergusano promises his leader (Monmouth), "I'll lay the Adamantine Book before you, where all the Destinies of Princes are Hieroglifick'd" (404).

disinclined to imitate classical rules that they never had been formally taught.

The marketability of the undisciplined form of Boyd's poem may have emboldened her to flout the "rules" of composition. It is actually a curiosity of much of Boyd's writing that she would often leave herself wide open to critical commentary on her whimsical composition, or even to accusations of incorrectness. *Variety* is the only work that contains frank acknowledgements of mistakes, though Boyd is largely unapologetic. She notes typographic slips but will not regret the writer's deliberate errors, as "Those obvious Rudenesses being contradictory to common Sense, and consequently too discernable to evade Criticism: These Lines beg may excuse her Blush, the good-natured Obligement" (74). The prosody of *Variety* is also something of a metrical adventure, maintaining the predominant iambic pentameter in rhyming couplets but also venturing into fast-paced and irregular metres and stanzas –"too lame, too rugged, harshly Line" (31)–which express associative thoughts and images and topics meaningful to 1720's Westminster. Words themselves are therefore associative, even made-up ("Bulk-got," "lumpous," "emvoid,""revolutory," "purplous"), and phrases are compiled in rapid, illogical succession. Boyd's muse, Proteus, in his role as *vates,* was believed in the seventeenth century, among many other things, to be maker, manipulator, and imitator of words which were considered by their very nature unstable. *Variety* is surprisingly confident that the flux or even mania inherent in human existence should be expressed in an innovative style.

Complementing the Menippean form of poem, is the key word "Variety" as theme, personification, and aesthetic standard which Boyd revisits throughout the poem. As a theme it draws on a rich inheritance of seventeenth and eighteenth-century medical texts, poems, essays, and sermons, with which the author seems familiar. These texts highlight

psycho-motivational impulses, ranging from melancholy, hysteria and insanity, as they were debated in pseudo-scientific terms, to "passions"-- intense emotions and desires, self-interests and capacities for artistic emotion-- , as they were most often represented in aesthetic terms. Burton's *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, for example, cites Aristotle's list of "fanatical persons," among them Proteus, who are afflicted with pathological states of mind. Individualistic "humours" are also represented in earlier works, such as Jonathan Swift's *Tale of the Tub,* in which vapours are a prime motivation for manic behaviour, and Anne Finch's popular poem, "The Spleen" (1701), the opening lines of which may have inspired the pervasive and delusive qualities of mental states in *Variety*: "Thou Proteus to abused mankind, / Who never yet thy real cause could find / Or fix thee to remain in one continued shape" (24). Numerous other pamphlets and poems advertised in the mid 1720's address private obsessions (such as ambition or pride) in conjunction with social ills, suggesting that the physiological and psychological found a wide political significance in later market-based texts of Walpolean London.[8]

Writing in this tradition of satirical or lyric commentary on emotional imbalance, Boyd parodies negative mercurial powers that plague Londoners ("Divine, or Atheist, Soldier, Trader, Scholar"[6] alike) by reproducing irrationality and depravity through her own irreverent and sometimes manic style. Religious enthusiasm, promiscuity, lust for power, rampant gambling, lawlessness, and even boredom are rendered pathological by the poem's rhetorical flights, *non sequiturs*, digressions, relentless repetitions, fanciful diction

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[8] *The Monthly Catalogue* (London: The Gregg Press Ltd., 1964) lists, for example, *A Critical Dissertation upon the Spleen* (May 1725); Edward Young, *The Universal Passion, Satire IV* (June 1725); *The Humourist; being Essays upon several Subjects, viz. News Writers, Enthusiasm, The Spleen . . . Pride, Idleness, Fickleness of humane Nature etc.* (July 1725); *A Satire on the Passions* (May 1726); Theodosia Witfield, *The Soul display'd; being an Essay on the Passions* (October 1726).

and figurative language. The ambitions of statesman, such as Marlborough or Walpole, resemble the "Conceits" of the mere "pretty" courtier: "he's into Madness rock'd / A *Moorfield's* Air, *Laver's* Sir *Half-brain's* Wits, / Hysterics change to melancholic Fits" (5). Even the singular languages of fable and political innuendo are pushed to illogical extremes. Walpole and his cronies are likened to ignoble birds of prey betraying their king, who is something less than heroic himself. "*Rook, Hawk,* and Raven, Croak alike Crass, Crass, / When each to Morrow, proves Treason was: / The *Kite*, the Buzzard, and the *Moon* shrowd *Owl, /* Deceive by turns, the honest reigning Fowl" (12-13). The speaker's frequent interjections fail to stabilise. Reason, justice, hope and piety become surreal measures, as the speaker projects individual mania onto a social platform, asking "Is not *our* very Minds *an* arrant Bite [emphasis mine]?"(3)

While Boyd's poem is neither linear nor chronological enough in form to be characterised as a topographical poem, its mock dedicatee and muse, Proteus, or the "Indisputable GOD of CHANGE" (73), may also be read as an animised London itself. Its reading audience was likely composed of fashionable Westminster society and those who served this "toyshop" world. What is known of Westminster at this time offers a material parallel to the quick paced, pulsing intensity of Boyd's poem. The speaker recreates the architectural "Birth" of the city:

> The Strenuous Beams, fix'd by a skilful Hand,
> Firm the Foundation, deep the Columns stand,
> The Mason, Marbler, Builder, Plumbers Pride,
> Make Beauties, Wind and Weather dare deride,
> The Painter blythly brights the polish'd Glass,

Vyes with the Goldsmith's Plate, and Founder's Brass (27)

From her own home Boyd witnessed the dizzying growth and change of local districts and parishes in the 1720's, a decade Defoe had characterized by extremes in urban development.[9] With its side- by-side slums and fashionable districts, Westminster was often referred to as a "medley" because it assembled all ranks and political and commercial interests.[10] Boyd wrote in her house near the Haymarket (home of the theatre that was to become Fielding's Little Theatre), Heiddegger's popular masquerades, as well as near Gerrard Street, with its many coffee houses and taverns frequented by artists and writers; Wardour Street, with its speciality shops; and Coventry Street, with its many public entertainments, primarily gaming houses.

As Pat Rogers points out, urban sprawl, civil unrest, natural disasters, and religious fanaticism often inform the vocabulary of Augustan satire.[11] They are imaged as alarming divisions, transitions, lesions and seepages--the very fabric of a literary piecework such as *Variety*. The ebb and flow of fashionable residents (welcome clientele and dreaded seasonal absenteeism), the signs of Westminster's opulence creeping both eastwards and westwards, and the rapid boom and bust of the less salubrious eastern businesses, dependent on the whims of a luxury economy, all must have served as visible markers of the instability that Boyd banked on both for the sale of her ephemeral print and for the appeal of her more sustained satires of human fickleness. Her (few) moral and philosophical platitudes merely

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[9] Construction, Defoe notes, is "really a kind of Prodigy," and the recently remodelled streets and squares of the more noble nooks of the political heartland offer the visitor a "new World of Brick and Tile" (21) *A Tour Thro' London about the year 1725*, ed. Sir Mayson M. Beeton (London: Benjamin Blom Inc., 1969).

[10] "If we look into the Streets, what a Medley of Neighbourhood do we see!" Thomas Pennant, *Some Account of London,* 1734.

[11] Pat Rogers, *Grub Street: Studies in a Subculture* (London: Methuen & Co., 1972).

further unsettle her reader's ebbing faith in Christian humanist values.

As an aesthetic gauge, rather than a psychological or moral measure, "variety" also signifies a pleasing variegation in art, as it was believed to have been once perfected in various mediums by the ancients. Boyd is, however, rare among her contemporaries for taking up the issue of aesthetic and linguistic unity and balance only to come down, however facetiously, on the side of idiosyncrasy and imbalance. A pleasing diversity was ideally harmonised and thus controlled in canonical works: in Pope's *Windsor-Forest*, for example, which praises scenes where "Order in Variety we see / And where, tho' all things differ, all agree" (14-15). As early as *An Essay on Criticism* in 1711, he had also already sought to manage surfeit of thoughts, styles and subjects in poetry. A true work of wit, he argues, seeks literary unity. "No single Parts unequally surprise; / All comes united to th' admiring eyes; / No monstrous Height, or Breadth, or Length appear; / The Whole at once is Bold and Regular."[12]

By the time Boyd published *Variety*, prolific output of complex works geared towards reading pleasure had yet to be immortalised by the *Dunciad's* description of Grub Street and its stylistic implications of "Mob of metaphors," "jumbled race" of poetic kinds, and volumes of the "amplest size."[13] However, there was already an established tradition which not only linked women readers and writers of undiscriminating taste to the production and consumption of worthless genres but also to promiscuous indulgence in mixed genres. The most famous instance is, of course, Addison's quest to establish a taste for "polite" writing, in which he describes Leonora's "*Lady's Library,*"penned by such a hodgepodge of

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[12] *An Essay on Criticism*, *The Poems of Alexander Pope: A One Volume Edition of the Twickenham Pope*, ed. John Butt (London: Methuen & Co Ltd) 249-252.

[13] Ibid, 67, 70, 158. The first version of *The Dunciad* came out in May 1728.

classical, didactic, polemical, instructional, romance and religious authors and framed by such a "Variety" of exotic and decorative "mixt kind of Furniture" that the gentleman does not know whether to "fancy" himself "in a Grotto, or in a Library."[14]

Thus Boyd may, at moments, comply with aesthetic standards by celebrating "Symmetry of Parts" or the "Compound, of Harmonious Arts" (30), usually as a pleasing series or succession found in the natural world or in poetry and painting. Primarily, however, she creates a satire of the volatile fluctuations of marketplace and of partisan politics which repeatedly builds, as jest, only to break up again--and so she disturbs all sense of continuity or expectation of a 'master' literary plan. All the while, her speakers plead a woman's ignorance of form, though it is impossible to imagine that she did not understand as well as any of her contemporaries that the word "variety" belonged to a lexicon sensitised to the actual and perceived aesthetic, financial, and political upheavals of the period. Unlike her "brothers of the pen," however, she choses to embrace this perceived chaos whole-heartedly, calling on her muse, "Furnish me PROTEUS, with a juster Pen, / To sing the many Minds, the many Men" (6).

As a muse for topical poetry or a divine machine for amplifying universality, Proteus, the fickle ocean god, is not entirely Boyd's creation. But as mutually informing perturbation of the mind and political predicament, he belongs to a particular historical moment and its consequences, as they were perceived primarily by the poets and, and as we will see, pamphlet writers of the 1720's. Most importantly he offers an unknown and inexperienced writer the opportunity to express the "Jingle of never-standing-still Thought and Brain Conceptions" (73): licence to speak impertinently to a wide audience.

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[14] *Spectator*, no.37, 12 April 1711.

Material Production and Implied Risk

Apart from the potential danger of being found out and charged with libel, it was comparatively simple for an author in the 1720's to adopt a pseudonym, write scandal, and take a one-time payout from a publisher. It required more subtlety to sell (news) of the lives of noble people, as well as the most sensitive of political affairs as entertainment, all the while aiming to please multiple feuding factions and to secure special privileges from a fallen patrician. This is what Boyd sets out to accomplish, she admits, "So younglings Marry, e'er they've Coin or Wit" (31).

The discrepancy between Boyd's optimistic attempt to establish herself with the publication of her first poem and the known facts of its material production is a reminder of the difficulties that many poets faced when they attempted to subsist on the proceeds of poetry exclusively. In many of her writings, but particularly *Variety*, Boyd shows herself tremendously self-conscious about her role as author, persistently asserting her individuality: her youth and sex and the audacity of her rash political views and literary ambitions. Thus, as her contemporary Eliza Haywood does in her works throughout the 1730's, Boyd attempts to create personae: individualised and gendered assertions of self which Paula McDowell claims emerged in many of the writings of the early eighteenth century. These help her strengthen strategies for political action.[15] Like Haywood, Boyd also mocks this need, perhaps realising that it did not necessarily guarantee agency in the literary marketplace. Towards the end of the Second Canto of *Variety*, she sounds pensive about the impressive entirety of her compressed pages. Calling attention to the pretension implied by

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[15]See Introduction to Paula McDowell, *The Women of Grub Street: Press, Politics, and Gender in the London Literary Marketplace 1678-1730* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998).

the sheer volume and scope of her work, she boasts that she swims the "full Flood" of literary greatness, unfortunately buoyed all the while by the insubstantial "Bladders" and "Cork" of her own gumption: "daring a Power beyond [her] strength," she "strives thro the unadvis'd great Work" (68).[16]

Boyd had reason to be tentative. *Variety* was advertised in the November 1726 edition of the *Monthly Chronicle* under "New Miscellaneous Pamphlets" rather than "Poetry." The work's market value apparently lay in its essential triviality, although this classification also may have underscored its political nature. Sold for 1s 6d, the poem was valued more than a sermon or ballad but less than the average long poem. Moreover, Boyd's name was omitted from the advertisement. Anonymous publication was prevalent, and her publisher may have seen her name as detrimental to earning power.

Variety is the first but not the last of Boyd's poems to employ the pseudonym "Louisa" (or Lovisa). It appears on the publication itself and suggests the author's or perhaps the publisher's understanding of market manipulation, as it adds to the ostentatiously "girlish" quality which Boyd exploits throughout her poem in order to increase dividends. She had delivered the poem unfinished for William Mackenzie, 5th fifth Earl of Seaforth, to peruse, as it would become her custom to seek initial approval or to engage the interest of a powerful person before publication. She asks, "Forgive . . . my juvenile Faults, for which my Sex and Youth, I hope will plead." Presuming that Boyd rather than her publisher selected the name Louisa, she may have fancied the royal connotations of the name: the queens of Spain and Sweden were both Louisa, and the infant

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[16]Elsewhere Boyd, unconventionally for a young woman compares herself to inexperienced "General" who "courts a Name, / Yet backwards treads, the steps to public Fame, / Rashly besieges, and as rashly takes, / His Monarch's Honours, with his own he breaks" (31).

royal, born near Boyd's residence, was Louise. A pseudonym does suggest, however, wariness of political or artistic disclosure.

The fact was that as a young and inexperienced author, Boyd, as yet, had little or no control over the means of her own production and circulation. This is evidenced by the direct sale of *Variety*'s copyright to B. Creake, a publisher of histories, bibles and songs whose shop was located in a Westminster business district merely half a mile from Boyd's home.[17] Opting for direct sale rather than owner's privilege of working with many publishers may imply a need for immediate return, often bettered through sale of copyright. The publication was likely something of a gamble for her two publishers, Creake and T. Warner, who shared the cost of the publication and also the potential risk of political obstacles or censorship. Boyd would never deal with either of these men again, in spite of her tendency to stick with publishers for four or more years, indicating that someone may not have benefited from the arrangement.

As for Boyd's reasons for publication, throughout her poem she candidly claims that she is writing with generic inclusiveness to please as many people as she can. This, she states, necessarily brings her to the popular but dangerous topic of politics. Like the "Tennis Bauble of an idle Day" (68), such topics (and their author) will amuse those who unthinkingly bat about the object of their pleasure without thinking of its preservation. It would be more sportsmanlike, she points out, if readers would help authors further the goal of accumulation (of what Catherine Ingrassia terms cultural and capital credit, in other words immediate fiscal return and more sustaining status as a writer).[18] Boyd argues that

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[17] *A Dictionary of the Printers and Booksellers who were in England, Scotland, and Ireland from 1725-1775,* ed. H.R. Plomer, G.H. Bushell, and E.R. Dix (London: Bibliographical Society, 1968) 66.

[18] See Ingrassia, 1-16.

both the process of writing and the publication of the work will reveal the elusive formula for a saleable product for the "many-minded populace"(34), but also for an investment in a more stable reading audience and potential future patrons. In her own words, "I meant [the poem] inofensive; which is all the serious Talk I think Variety merits," but "to write upon Variety, and not find Room, for the Crown, . . . tis nothing at all" (34). Thus her solution for combatting the fact of ephemerality was to point to the danger of publication and to repeatedly focus the reader's attention on the material conditions of the author's existence. She reminds her audience that pleasing with a fleeting political utterance necessarily involves the author in financially and politically precarious situations, but a victory wreath or a "crown" (five shillings) is fair reparation for news of the "Crown."

This obvious political content may account for the poem's initial advertisement as "pamphlet miscellanies" rather than poetry. From the outset in its Dedication, *Variety* sells itself as contentious, willing to offer provocative contemporary issues and political riddles for readers to negotiate their own opinions and politics. The author's first attempt to secure a patron through the dedication of her work to the 2nd Earl of Seaforth suggests the potential for inflammatory political narratives but wisely withholds ultimate authorial assent or dissent. She writes,

> Variety begs leave to give Your LORDSHIP a Welcome
> to all the Honours of your noble Progenitors, as well as those
> of your Own matchless Merit; Welcome, Great Man, from a
> too tedious Exile; our Court and Closet long have wanted you,
> and now our State, and your own Country-men must bless the
> Justice of that *Change* that hath so kindly given you to our

Wishes. The World knows My Lord SEAFORT'S Worth,
and it is a Theme above a Woman to tell a Peer he's deserving
when every Action of his Life assures us it.

In July 1726 Seaforth was discharged from execution and imprisonment under his attainder, implemented after his complicity in the French invasion of Scotland during the 1715 Jacobite rebellion. He is therefore a pardoned traitor. Boyd emphasizes the intrepidity of her praise for the restored charismatic man, claiming that she is "proud to be the first" to ask for his protection "in so public a manner."

In 1727 during a decade in which patronage and market-based literary cultures were equally accessible, Boyd's political writing had to mediate between expectations of reliable patronage and what she perceived would be an increasing reliance on a heterogenous marketplace. Seaforth can be read monologically through this praise; if his subscription to Boyd's succeeding novel offers any clue, he read himself as a defender of stability and honour and as an antithesis to protean Whig and Hanoverian behaviours. But for Boyd's purposes, Seaforth is primarily a rich site for disputatious public representation. Boyd's use of him suggests a creative adaptation of traditional encomiastic writing.

The fact was that many times in her career Boyd would chose charismatic dedicatees, but she was never foolish enough to attach herself to broke and unlikely nobles. To accept her panegyric literally as admiration for a Stuart deliverer (even as a figure for "James III" himself) is to ignore Seaforth's insolvency, his notorious "shameful conduct about money matters," rumours among Stuart sympathizers of his assumed role in the failure of the 1715 rising, and James Stuart's disappointment that Seaforth sought peace

with George II in 1726.[19] Moreover, Boyd 's dedication of her succeeding novel to John Duke of Argyle, who not only fought against Seaforth in the "Fifteen" but also violently opposed his pardon in 1726, restricts a straightforward Jacobite reading. And yet an interpretation that sees Boyd capitalizing on pro-Hanoverian satisfaction with Seaforth's apparent capitulation to George II and his defection from the Pretender's camp is equally inadequate. Her admiration for the Scottish patriot appears genuine. Likely Seaforth is a symptom of and figure for a broader English political state that does not "truly know" itself as a "great Man" should. (One could not read "great man" without thinking of Walpole.) He is a portent of political opinion disparately fearful and anticipatory of another Restoration and an icon for the "approaching sunshine" of a better government. Boyd claims, "our Court and Closet long have wanted you, . . . and now our State, . . . must bless the Justice of that *Change* that hath so kindly given you to their Wishes." His sudden turnabout is another instance of political 'variety.'

More concretely, Boyd offers for sale a diverting and conflicted personage and a vicarious glimpse for readers of their own divided political impulses. From the outset political inference in *Variety* can only be read assuredly as a site for the unresolved and pending, and a refusal on Boyd's part to commit to any ideology or cause. She recognizes that she offers profitable and combative assemblages of public representations.

The poem itself veers between issues as serious as kingship or political intrigue and more frothy indulgences of gossip. It sports with heightened interest in and fear of coded commentary, turning it into a marketable diversion but also a vehicle for distrust of the

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[19]Seaforth was accused of neglecting to return money of James III that he held in Scotland. *The Complete Peerage* vol xi, 585. The Earl of Mar, Tory grandee and Jacobite leader, was named "Bobbing John" for his constantly changing views, not to mention his indecisive actions during war.

political establishment.[20] Yet the poem simply claims to humour (occupy and amuse) knowing readers with symbols, codes, and cryptograms popularized by the indicting letters of the Atterbury trial (not everyone found the hunt for hidden significance as ludicrous as Swift's Lagado signage implies).[21] Rather than appear innocuous, like Hanoverian and Stuart informers who employed and decoded political motives, Boyd peddles libel as linguistic-political play by repeatedly daring the reader to apply opposition or even Jacobite intention to equivocal passages. One instance reads,

> What fearful Murmurs, and what public Plaints
> Against the best of Kings, by *Pluto's* Saints,
> PLUTO, the black-soul'd God, of neither Worlds,
> 'Gainst whom *Joves* angry'st Bolt, Fire red he Furls
> *Proserpine's,* Rapes, still hisses in his Ear,
> A black Reserve, shall right the injur'd Fair (10).

Implications here were likely as complex in 1726 as they seem now. George I could be either "the best of Kings" or the "black-soul'd God": to detractors, the German was of "neither Worlds [neither worlds]," though so was the exiled James III whose perceived supporters are implicated as "Pluto's Saints." A "black Reserve" may allude to Seaforth, known as "William Dubh" (the black), and other Jacobite reinforcements. As Pluto is also the god of riches, his "saints" are presumably motivated by greed.

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[20]After 1730 Boyd would indulge the public with popular novelty pieces, such as riddles and poems to be "played to the tune of" popular songs and performed at public entertainments.

[21]For discussions of modes of eighteenth-century scandal writing see Patricia Meyer Spacks, *Gossip* (Chicago: U of Chicago, 1986); Lawrence Lipking, "The Jacobite Plot," *ELH* 64:4 (1997) 843-55; Paul Monod, *Jacobitism and the English People, 1688-1788* (Cambridge CUP, 1989); Alexander Pettit, "Anxiety, Political Rhetoric, and Historical Dramas Under Walpole," *Ideas, Aesthetics, and Inquiries in the Early Modern Era Vol II,* ed. Kevin Cope and Deborah Ann Jacobs (New York: AMS P, 1994).

In the above passage, as in others in *Variety*, Boyd draws on a prophetic and poetic voice of to question monarchic legitimacy, by stirring the vengeful "hisses" of informed pubic imagination. Opinion is enlightened by this justifiably enraged female voice. (The visionary or angered and wronged woman would return in Boyd's works at key political moments in history.) Proserpine is a figure for Boyd herself, but also she is also the territorial body of England and, perhaps, the imprisoned Sophia Dorothea of Brunswick and Zelle. Pluto could represent either George I or the Old Pretender.

In terms of its chronological placement in the history of eighteenth-century political satire, *Variety* is actually an early and very opportunistic anti-court statement, which likely would have been targeted for libellous content had it appeared two or three years later. In fact it is politically pre-emptive, as many writers, "hack" and elite alike, still hoped for reward and advancement from Walpole's government in 1726; but Boyd possibly speculated that the female "infant pen" (63) had less to gain in terms of regular pension or salary than her male contemporaries. Contrary to most historical chronologies, "lesser" poets, political journalists and moral essayists were by this time already reacting to Walpole's perceived power. Traditional accounts of him as the "poets foe" pay lip service to the opposition press in the early years of his domination of English politics. Literary historians claim that the "Great Man" was not attacked "virulently and consistently" until the wits engaged in partisan politics from late in 1726 until his fall early in 1742.[22] Yet

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[22]Brean Hammond, *Pope and Bolingbroke: A Study in Friendship and Influence* (Columbia: Missouri UP, 1984) 18; Jeremy Black, ed. and intro. *Britain in the Age of Walpole* (New York: St. Martins P, 1984) 7; Isaac Kramnick, *Bolingbroke and his Circle: The Politics of Nostalgia in the age of Walpole* (Cambridge Mass: Harvard UP,1968) 17. All cite 1726-1728 as opposition years. Hammond claims that there was "token" opposition from Walpole's accession in 1721 to December 1726, and Jeremy Black claims that the "period 1722-5 is probably the most obscure and least studied of all eighteenth-century British history, despite its "great importance because [it] witnessed the establishment of the Walpolean 'system'" (7). J. A. Downie writes, "Perhaps no minister in English history would be so virulently and consistently assaulted by intellectuals as Walpole was in the years 1726-1728" ("Walpole, the Poets's

Variety's publication straddles nascent hostile works, as yet unexplored by scholars, and more familiar oppositional historical dramas: *The Craftsman*, Fielding's *The Life of Mr. Jonathan Wild*, Gay's *Fables* and, of course, the renowned Scriblerian achievements, *Gulliver's Travels*, *The Beggar's Opera*, and *The Dunciad*.

In fact, in the two years preceding *Variety* there was a market for pamphlets of discontent. Political journalists participated in an ongoing interpretation of actual and rumoured events, as everything from petitions to Walpole and implicative critiques of historical instances of "Corruption and Bribery" and "Impeachments" (Cardinal Wolsey and Oliver Cromwell) to scandals of "foreign" courts and veiled satires of Walpole's acquisition of the Order of the Garter offered an outlet for public curiosity and agitation.[23] Most of these works were anonymous ephemera to be read once and discarded, but others, such as the "Life of Cardinal Wolsey," were reprinted and evoked ongoing responses and roused more widespread discontent. The wits' assertions that Walpole legitimised the "Smithfield Muses" at the expense of genuine men of letters overlooks the initial energy and innovation of Grubstreet opposition pamphlets, essays, and poems, which not only provided a commercial space but also a political lexicon for their own anti-ministerial campaign.

Foe," *Britain in the Age of Walpole* 171).

[23] *A Collection of the Proceedings in the House of Commons, against Lord Verulam, Viscount St. Albans, Lord High Chancellor of England, for Corruption and Bribery* (1725); *An Inquiry into the Origin of Parliamentary Impeachments. With a history of the most remarkable Proceedings of the kind* (1725); *The Justice of Parliaments on corrupt Ministers, in Impeachments and Bills of Attainder, considered* (1725); *The Life of Oliver Cromwell* (1725); *Remarks Critical and Political on a late Poem, entitled The Instalment In which the Spirit and Judgement of the Author are Particularily examin'd* (1726); Eliza Haywood, *The Secret History of the present Intrigues of the Court of Caramania* (1726); *Letters from the Palace of Fame; written by a First Minister in the Regions of the Air . . . Translated from an Arabian Manuscript* (1726).

Thus by late 1726, *Variety* was able to draw upon already available and publicly identifiable satire: general Mandevillean observations on self-interest and luxury; exposures of private scandal and political craft in the tradition of the *chronique scandaleuse*; and, more specifically, topoi such as historical comparisons between the government and ancient autocrats (Domitian and Nero[5]), nostalgic effusions about the "everlasting Glory"of Queen "*Anna*" (69), and analogies between Walpole and a Leviathan, a "Fox" (69) and, repeatedly, a "murdering, unskill'd, fam'd Physician"(69). Economic advancement, political clout and social mobility were accessible to both the malpractising physician and the corrupt Whig. Occupational abuses were on the minds of opposition writers, as evidenced by the title of the *Craftsman* and its fictional editor, Caleb d'Anvers' statement of intent to "expose corruption and craft in all professions."[24]

Predictably, Boyd's most slanderous commentary is obscured by her poem's fast pace and its associative images, but political satire of newsworthy or at least scandalous events and personages were probably recognisable to knowing audiences. The poem capitalises on the specific exacerbated political climate of 1725 and 1726, when crops failed, Britain was on the brink of war with Spain, and malcontent Whigs, rallied around William Pulteney, failed in their attempts to bring Walpole down.[25] Targets include everything from the standing army to Dutch sway over Whig financial practises, and

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[24] *The Country Journal, or, The Craftsman*, 1726; Nibelius Folke, "Lord Bolingbroke in the Craftsman: The Technique of the Historical Mirror," *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth-Century* 303 (1992): 429-32.

[25] Residing in London, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu describes the summer of 1726 to her sister: "War and rumours of Wars make all the conversation at present. The tumbling of the stocks one way or other influences most people's affairs . . . . This town improves in Gaity ev'ry day . . . . and we insensibly begin to taste all the Joys of Arbitrary Power. Politics are no more; no body pretends to wince or Kick under their Burdens, but we go on cheerfully with our Bells at our Ears, ornamented with Ribands and highly contented with our present condition" (66). *The Complete Letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, ed. Robert Halsbrand. (London: OUP, 1965).

everyone from former Secretary of State, John Carteret, to Maids of Honour, Mary Bellenden and Sophia Howe.[26] But contemporaries were likely best pleased by the poem's defamatory potential. One passage breathlessly lists,

> Tell what misled brave youngling, long exiled,
> Of late to giving David's reconciled;
> Tell what Sir Credulous's, easie Spouse,
> Grows infamous, for breaking Nuptial vows,
> Make confident of Trader, late repents it,
> But Change is Charming, and she'll ne'er recant it;
> Tell what late celebrated Beauty grows
> Assembly-keeper, and in Age, trap's Beaus;
> Tell what fond Wife, to Husband more than Chaste
> Sends him to Heaven in a Lover's Haste
> . . . . . .
> Tell what Court-Darling, dar'd refuse his Prince,
> A handsome Mistress, and convey her hence;
> Tell what Coquette, once thought a Royal Favour,
> Marrys a Soldier, and reforms Behaviour
> Tell what Court-Maiden, loses Fee and Fame,
> By Blots of Conduct, that make public Shame,

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[26] For discussions of Court intrigue at this time see John M. Beattie, *The English Court in the Reign of George I* (London: CUP, 1967); Peter Quennell *Caroline of England* (New York: The Viking Press, 1940); Anne Somerset, *Ladies in Waiting: from the Tudors to the Present Day* (New York: Knopf, 1984); William Henry Wilkins *Caroline the Illustrious, Queen Consort of George II and Sometime Queen Regent; a Study of her Life* (London: Longmans, 1904).

Refused by him, that help'd undoe her Credit,

More Rich, less Honourable, in hast she Wedded (9-10)

Several months after the publication of *Variety*, John Gay also responded to an exacerbated political climate by comparing the political man to the fickle ocean god in his Fable 33, "The Courtier and Proteus."[27] Both works assume that only a politician can rival Proteus's ability to turn sycophant, predator or tyrant at whim. But since he was still hoping for preferment at Court, Gay's allegories and wide targets make for less barbed and recognisable criticism than Boyd's relentless allusions to political corruption and private intrigue.

Closer to *Variety*, politically if not temporally, was recent publication by Jacobite Jane Barker: *The Lining of the Patch Work Screen: Design'd for the Farther Entertainment of the Ladies*, her second *Patchwork* book to reorganize popular "histories" into a series of condensed and linked romances, poems, hymns, recipes and philosophical reflections. It is easier to locate moral centres in Barker's sensational and, occasionally, instructive domestic dramas than in Boyd's sweeping derisions; but both thread topoi of pacifist goals (party and religious peace) into a wide miscellany of subjects. As "true daughters" of Behn and Manley (and forebears of Felicia Hemans, Anna Letitia Barbauld, and Letitia Landon), both Barker and Boyd employ domestic metaphors for combative and corrupt public life: selfish pursuit of sexual and economic gratifications and childish "masculinist" contest. Both critique continental involvement in the mid 1720's, as tensions build between England and

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[27] John Gay, *Fables by the Late John Gay in One Volume Complete with Wood-Engravings by Gillian Lewis Taylor* (Bare Mass: Imprint Society, 1970); Flavio Gregori, "John Gay's Fables: A Child's Work?" *Heart of Lightness: The Magic of Children's Literature*, ed. Laura Tosi (Venice: Cafoscarina, 2001); Pawel Jedrzejko, "The Deep Structure of Narrative Element in Neoclassical Fable," *Studia-Anglica Posaniensia: An International Review of English Studies* 30 (1996): 169-82.

Spain and the country debates the future of an unpopular standing army. Boyd jeers, "How have I seen, a Man of great Design, / Freight Ships, Kill Armies, Monarchs undermine, / just as a Boy, with Scizers, makes a Fleet, / Paper his Timber, and his Fire-balls Wheat" (48). Although Barker's overarching site for discussion, the patch-work screen, moves within a more clearly defined "feminine" and rural vision of the world than Boyd's non-committal and maim-with-shrapnel approach, both see an avenue to influencing world-political events in the hybrid that sidesteps direct confrontation, if it should arise legally or socially.

Ultimately what is more important than tangible political meanings in *Variety* is reader appreciation for how such opinions circulate, as well for the cultural centrality of the author who orchestrates their circulation. Of greater interest to modern readers than Boyd's blow-by-blow on the suspicious actions of certain Court Whigs, the subtleties of which are now lost to us, is her realization that there should be rewards in place for those who offer this public knowledge. Protected writers and skilled politicians may talk of "honour" (a "titular Nothing"), Boyd argues. Either one, however, can be seen as a "designing Rascal, / That cleanly lyes, and knows compleat to mask all." The poor poet, however, navigates a "dangerous Eddy" (68) for the recreation of her audience, and so Boyd claims, she is left with little choice but to leave the audience "To think on Poet's empty-purs'd Condition." (68)

A(Georgian)Woman's Right to Write

Criticism of women's literature must always come round to the topics of an author's sense of herself as female, as well as her place "in the rise of" the major genres *vis-à-vis* other

writers, male or female. These are often difficult tasks to manage, more so when it comes to examination of early texts and authors. As Janet Todd observes of Aphra Behn, "Romantic notions of art as self-expressing were not current in the Restoration [nor were they by Boyd's time], and men openly wrote for money and political purpose"(3). As will be argued more thoroughly in a subsequent chapter that looks to Boyd's shorter political poems, there was an "middle" generation (1720-45) of women writers who negotiated the conflict between public and gendered discourses of power, inherited from the previous generations of female propagandists (including Behn), and growing pressures to conform with the ideals of the emerging domestic "poetess" of the mid century. First, however, it is very important to note that *Variety* makes an interesting study along the same lines because it traces a young woman's attempt to save the reputations of the earlier authors she values: and so resist this negation of an openly market-based print culture shaped by women who were rather suddenly declared 'sluttish.'[28]

Before examining Boyd's efforts to redeem her favourite writers, and so claim legitimacy for the 'modern' writing women, it is necessary to examine *Variety's* attempts to acclimatize to and then "swim" the unsullied waters of "gentlemanly" literary values. The canon, in the sense of a wide concurrence of authors, readers, and publishers that certain authors and styles are of high literary merit, is believed to have been developed only at the end of the eighteenth century.[29] Yet Catherine Ingrassia points out that many of Boyd's

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[28]Jeslyn Medoff attributes the fall in status of writers such as Behn to "a change in literary and theatrical taste, a movement away from the 'licence' of the age and towards a more 'moral' and sentimental outlook." (33) "The daughters of Behn and the problem of reputation," *Women, Writing, History,* ed. Isobel Grundy and Susan Wiseman (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1992) 55-72.

[29]Douglas Lane Patey, "The Eighteenth-Century Invents the Canon," *Modern Language Studies* 18.1 (1988): 17-37; Trevor Ross, "The Emergence of 'Literature': Making and Reading the English Canon in the Eighteenth Century," *ELH* 63.2 (1996): 397-422.

contemporaries construct a literary hierarchy that "extends the binary of socio-economic relations . . . to socio-literary" (42), and although the Scriblerians did not declare full-scale war on professionalised and hybridised writing by unworthy hacks until after 1726, the ideal of the classically educated, polite male author who was disinterested in commercial gain was already in place. This artificial dialectic was as compelling to critics then as it is now, and it goes some way towards explaining Boyd's dogged attempt to win her readers over to the exciting instability of a cultural Haymarket. She saw this as the only hope for the professional woman.

One of *Variety's* sustaining attractions, and indeed one of Boyd's, is its effort to disprove contemporary assumptions that manufactured product literature was inevitably confined to lower genres. Thus the poem itself demands to be read both as (and as something other than) an ephemeral product. Boyd's claim that her work is mere diversion, as Manley had earlier claimed "mere" romantic fiction, is not entirely guileful. Classical Menippean satires develop the reader's taste for "play," intellectual practise but also *laxandi*, or the release of tension within the satire and for the reader's diversion and repose. Nevertheless, in its entirety, the poem demonstrates how mass political concerns can be expressed in "high" literary forms and how humanist ideals and moral and political subjects can be debated in the print-oriented modes, as they sometimes are through song, play, and ballad in Boyd's other works.

Although Boyd likely received a rudimentary formal education, *Variety* proves she was at least somewhat knowledgeable about mythology as a poetic tradition. She is able to manage high rhetoric and heroic couplets, sometimes with detached humour and sometimes with earnest persuasiveness. Towards the end of the poem she retells the tragic story of the

incestuous love between the daughter and son of the tempestuous god of the winds. This trails behind *Variety*'s two long and whimsical topical cantos as "Macareus to Aeolus" and "Macareus to Pluto," responses to Dryden's adaptation of Ovid's *Heroides* Epistle XI, "Canace to Macareus." One of Boyd's more thoughtful female speakers observes,

> Canance and Macareus I oft have read, and have as often wondered Canance's Letter never found return, I own I thought the Story Moving, and why our Wits have left it thus unfinish'd, am at a loss to judge: What crime lost us Canance's funeral Dirge, What God made Macareus love to such a Guilt, such Excess, yet feel a Woe, like Dying Canance, without Exclamation, a Surprize. I argued thus, thus split the Controversy, urg'd on by Nature to defend my Sex. (76)

She is evidently inspired by the popular female tragic monologue, such as Pope's "Eloisa to Abelard," and their responses, the female-penned literary kind, the male tragic monologue. Both originated with Ovid.[30] But responding to contemporary disdain for the political propagandist's grasp of the market economy and her frequent publication of multiple and often mixed genres, Boyd apparently wished to mediate somewhat between classical and popular cultures.[31] The use that she makes of classical allusion proves this desire to

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[30]Judith Madan's "Abelard to Eloisa" is one example, although it was published a year and a half after *Variety*. See Rachel Trickett's "The *Heroides* and the English Augustans," *Ovid Renewed*, ed Charles Martindale (Cambridge: CUP, 1988) 191-204.

[31]Again, London topography in the 1720's is telling, as entertainment available to Boyd in Westminster and London, including plays and Heidegger's masquerades and ridottos, were satirised by contemporary moralists for their mercenary motives, preferences for foreigners, levelling tendencies, and debasements of polite tastes. That the "middling sort" and even the "rabble" could delight in the same kinds of entertainment as the Prince and Princess of Wales must have been evident to Boyd, as their royal residence, Leicester House, neighboured Boyd's own. It was frequented by members of the opposition but also by participants in Princess Caroline's masquerades and charades between 1717 and 1727, and the Haymarket, where ridottos were affordable to mingled audiences throughout the decade. Perhaps these sites motivate her attempts to compensate for the cultural remoteness of validated polite entertainment, and popular and profit driven amusements.

mingle. Throughout, numerous evoked deities resemble the "serious and Grotesque" dancers with classical names, the copious Apollos and Daphnes who were appendages of entertainments throughout the 1720's, rather than heroic and Homeric gods inspired by the classics.[32]

Boyd's argument that canonical writing is somehow incomplete and amenable to miscellaneous intermixture with 'lower' themes is matched by her cheekier attempts to explode the myth of the leisured and learned writer who is unsoiled by either speculative investment in political intrigues or games of literary supply and demand. This facade of pristine authorship was endorsed whole-heartedly by many of Boyd's contemporaries, even by otherwise egalitarian-minded poets such as Mary Leapor, who defends Pope on his own terms as a disinterested poet persecuted by literary hacks.[33]

One way Boyd explodes this myth is by pointing to the hypocrisy of her cultured audience. Successful writers are "knowing Gamsters" (67), dynamic parsons are inspired by "play" (71), and beauty observed in the mall or park is like a "Book but few a-right know" (60). Some pretend to sneer at what they enjoy in private, as "the Learned" are "puzzl'd at [her poem's] ever Rounding" (68), but then they are equally clueless when it comes to the importance of the cycles of clothing fashions or the circuit at the Park. So, she argues, if Londoners are indeed witnessing a cultural decline, as the wits insist, moralists would do well to look to the non-discriminating consumers rather than compliant

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[32]Lawrence Lipking, "The Gods of Poetry: Mythology and the Eighteenth-Century Tradition," *Augustan Subjects: Essays in Honor of Martin C Battestin,* ed. Albert J Rivero (London: Associated UP, 1997): 68-86.

[33]See Donald C. Mell, ed. *Pope, Swift, and Women Readers.* (Newark: U of Delaware Press, 1996); Claudia Thomas, *Alexander Pope and his Eighteenth-Century Women Readers* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 1994); Richard Greene, *Mary Leapor: a Study in Eighteenth-Century Women and Poetry* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993).

producers: "Deserve or not Deserve, is not the Matter, / Who vary's most his Gesture, gets the Better" (21).

Variety also explodes the myth of cultural 'gentlemanly' superiority by confronting the gentlemen themselves. With surprising abruptness, Boyd observes the monetary ambitions of cultural pundits, citing, for example, Gay's courtship of Whig favour: "Honour, [Gay] writes in Words, in Bows, in Reams" (70); however, "The Staff of Honourable's still tip'd with yellow" (71). Boyd's point is not so much that polite writing is a cover for commercial or patronage interests, but more simply that all authors share the concerns of wage earning and reader approval. The topic of wage earning in the poem is often painfully self-referential, as she regrets that the young poet must flounder beside the "better fed" and "better grown" (68), while "Gay, Swift, Pope, Eusden, move on smoothly Springs, / Gorge honey's Hives, and borrow yellow'd Wings" (67).

Arguably Boyd points to the unequal division of dividends in order to appeal for sympathy and increased financial support, but also to uncover the machinery held in common by all participants in print culture. At her most cunning Boyd indemnifies more reproachful commentary on the oppressive eminence of a literary elite through dramatised gossip, which is at times amusingly imitative of the very oral traditions, broadside texts, and periodicals that the wits would probably have viewed as debasements of polite discourse. For instance, a satire on a "Coxcomb" who gossips with a debtor about a mystery "man of Letters" who receives a "large gleaning" from Lewis (Pope's publisher between 1709 and 1727) and who "will not shrink at Ave-Mary" (52) is as critical of mercurial behaviours and manners as any Augustan satire. But it is simultaneously as incriminating of Pope, as the self-appointed guardian of socially-approved behaviour, as was any Atterbury or

Buckingham trial. The successful author is portrayed as necessarily involved in the exposure of but also in the very action of perceived and mutually informing political and financial intrigue.

Besides shrewdly observing the self-aggrandizement of these influential authors, on her own volition, Boyd likely shared a popular changing view of the professions in the 1720's, which enabled a more public stance than she otherwise would have dared. Publications from this time indicate that the reading public was interested in the differences between professions and trades, the bookish requirements of professions, and the determining factors of social rank and gender in admittance to or status of professional organizations. Although professional classes did not experience feelings of complete solidarity, the political climate of Westminster by 1726 allowed for an awareness of client relations--the mutual dependence of 'quality' and tradespeople.[34]

Thus in Boyd's mind, her public would be amenable to a concept of the production of political satire or polemical literature as an 'occupation.' She sees her work as political satire, as evidenced by her evocation of Proteus, "Lend thy young Brother MERCURY lighter Wings / And Canvas swell'd Fames, many, Mouth'd deep stings" (6), which links the claims of the god Mercury (commerce, eloquence, and manual skill) to adeptness in both panegyric and satire. As female political propagandists in Queen Anne's reign had done,[35] Boyd employs childbirth imagery to justify her own involvement, suggesting the residual influence of the moral maternal authority embodied by the Queen: "the Town will easily

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[34] See Geoffrey Holmes, *Augustan England: Professions, State, and Society, 1680-1730* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1982).

[35] Carol Barash, "'The Native Liberty . . . of the Subject': Configurations of gender and authority in the works of Mary Chudleigh, Sarah Fyge Egerton, and Mary Astell," *Women, Writing, History* 55-72.

conceive, I did not at first intend [the last Canto]; but I know not how, Fancy forced, the Birth forwarded, and I e'en turn'd Midwife." (34) But more along the same lines of Delariviere Manley, Boyd turns her liability as female propagandist into an advantage. Writing, like midwifery, is a livelihood available to the skilled woman, and it is a more legitimate profession in the sense of specialised knowledge applied to the service of others.

Admittedly *Variety* endorses, as Boyd's other works would, a perceived hierarchy of taste and accomplishment, in so far as she acknowledges that some writers are "Sons of finished Art" or "Poets worth the Name." But never in the course of her career would Boyd stand for attempts to ghettoise what amounts to plebeian and female politics and print.[36] Sardonically she notes, "Old *Chaucer, Cowley, Spencer, Shakespeare, Ben,* / Writ most unfashionably, who know's when" (66). Mock dismissal of some of the hitherto most revered poetic artisans as "unfashionable" satirises superficial tastes but, more complexly, draws attention to the intervention of individual judgement in the valuation of acceptable entertainments: pleasures once held in "common," she argues, have been narrowed to polite edification to the point of unrecognizability.

On this account, Boyd reproves critical standards that do not allow for the varying goals and achievements of print culture(s), particularly when she praises literary entrepreneurs who have the ability to predict and to indulge the whims of diverse audiences. Interestingly, she champions the playwright and, to a lesser degree, the romance novelist rather than the poet. Perhaps the victories of better-paid and more candidly

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[36]This broad trend implies the "bourgeois public sphere's" undermining of competing political communities. As Paula McDowell puts it, "[Jurgen] Habermas suggested but did not expand on the possibility that from its inception the idealised concept of 'the' (bourgeois) public actually functioned to contain, control, or otherwise delimit the activities of various other contemporary publics or forms for discussion." (*The Women of Grub Street*, 9).

reputation-conscious plays and fictions were reassuring, and Boyd likely observed an affinity between her political pamphleteering satire and other dangerous genres for women writers, such as scandal fiction and drama. A significant increase in attention paid to theatrical affairs in the news and in literary and weekly journals guaranteed a knowing audience. So she pays tribute to plays published and performed at Drury Lane and Lincoln's-Inn- Fields Theatres between 1714 and 1724, and of course their more popular playwrights: Thomas Otway, Laurence Eusden, Joseph Mitchell, George Farquhar and George Etherege, to name a few.[37]

A notable exception to Boyd's praise of mainstream works is her reference to Manley's *Lucius, the first Christian King of Britain.* It was a moderate success and a Tory play, though it undoubtedly interested Boyd on account of its feminized version of English history. Vortimer, usurper to the throne (Cromwell, William III and George I), is juxtaposed with the love object and most interesting character, Rosalinda, the first Christian queen of England and possibly reminiscent of recently-deceased Queen Anne. Boyd's knowledge that the stage was a site of conflict, especially for the aspiring female artist, renders her encomium to the "Moderns" (whose "Works, not faultless, know the Art to please") all the more politicised, her awareness of which is suggested by her appellative for flattery: "commendatory War" (67).

Manley and Centlivre, two of the writers who had inspired Boyd to write, had died earlier in the 1720's. Their deaths seem to have motivated *Variety's* assessment of

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[37]A gravitation in theatrical tastes towards the more sentimental themes in the early eighteenth century may have encouraged Boyd to commend popular and less controversial tragedies and sentimental comedies: *The Orphan, The Conscious Lovers, The Fair Penitent* and *The Distrest Mother*. Presumably "downy Boy" (62) Charles Beckingham, whose play secured only two performances, is given honourable mention by the young, aspiring poet because of his own youth upon first publication.

women's literary endeavours to date, as well as Boyd's proposals for new aesthetic and financial strategies. By the 1720's women writers were painfully self conscious about citing literary precedents with whom they necessarily linked their own reputations. As Jeslyn Medoff points out, "[w]omen writers who followed in [Behn's] wake would have to make conscious decisions about accepting, rejecting or refashioning their precedents . . . [and] controlling their reputations as women, which were essentially inseparable from their reputations as writers"(Medoff, 35).[38] Still Boyd outspokenly and enthusiastically insists on claiming her infamous female literary inheritance through Manley and also through the dubious reputation of Centlivre. Of Manley she writes effusively,

> Dear *Manley,* how *British Lucius* warms!
> Thy *Atlantic* Satire, how it charms!
> Heav'n what a Stile! How soft, concise and great
> Where sweet, strong just, correctly either greet:
> Sure she that pen'd the lov'ly ill-us'd MOOR
> Dropt thee her well-writ *Oroonoko's* Power:
> Farewel, thou best accomplish'd of the Fair
> Snatch'd hence in haste to grace a nobler Sphere (66-67)

With similar ardour she writes of Centlivre, "Spite of the cruellest God *Centlivre's* Name / In varied ways shall make *Centlivre's* Fame" and "*Centlivre* to thy Shade I owe these Lines, / My youngling Muse, a Product of thy Mines" (64). Centlivre's reputation was indeed a bounteous but explosive "Mine." As a lower-middling class, politically-motivated

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[38]Roger Lonsdale claims, "By 1718 a "respectable," though far from stuffy, woman writer like Jane Brereton would disown the dubious precedents of Behn, Manley, and Haywood" (*Eighteenth-Century Women Poets*, xxiii). Also see Jaqueline Pearson, *The Prostituted Muse: Images of Women and Women Dramatists 1642-1737* (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1988).

playwright (and a Whig) who was tremendously successful on the stage and in print and who openly advocated the female pen and the cultural legitimacy of popular taste, Centlivre is a fitting icon to form Boyd's "youngling Muse." Just the same, Boyd was well aware that cultural critics (Pope among others) were attempting to obliterate Centlivre's "Name" with scarcely less authority than the "cruellest God" who had recently claimed her person (she died in 1723). Boyd could not have chosen a more provocative model, except perhaps Aphra Behn, whom she praises elsewhere in scarcely less daring panegyric. In all, courting a link between one's writing and the queens of ribald fiction was not necessarily disastrous, as evidenced by the successful subscription list of Boyd's novel, published five years later, the title page of which quotes Manley. As it returns to the dubious reputations of writing women, *Variety* sets out to consolidate women's literary status.

The only cultural force more disconcerting to Boyd than "celebrated finish'd Men" (63) is that of women writers with a degree of cultural valour who employ wit to discredit other aspiring women artists. Perhaps mindful of Eliza Haywood's attack on Martha Sansom in a recent publication, *Memoirs of a Certain Island Adjacent the Kingdom of Utopia*, Boyd overwrites admiration of Haywood with kindly reproof:

> What modern She hath grasp'd such true Desert,
> Who does not envy thee thy charming Art?
> But take this Truth, and take it from a Friend,
> To your own Sex a kinder Envoy send;
> Let not a Woman's Writings blur her Sex,
> Whiles too, too charming she their Faults dissects;
> O Haywood! ever fear the Coxcomb Croud;

Of woman's Error critically proud. (62)

Paula McDowell claims that London's "community" of female propagandists in the early eighteenth century "was not yet grounded in a shared sense of gender identity" (11) Yet Boyd has a solid grasp on the larger implications of women's petty literary feuds, unlike party writers such as Manley and scandal writers such as Haywood who attack their rivals both as women and as artists. Boyd recognises that defamation of a sister writer ("Friend") "blurs" or sullies the victim's fragile personal reputation and questions the perceived integrity of her entire sex.[39]

Thus the privileged or popular writer must employ the power of "charming" readers cautiously, lest she depreciate women's achievements in readers' eyes or mislead the vision of women who would engage in literary pursuits. The line "Let not a Woman's Writings blur her Sex" implies a woman's "Sex," in terms of her prescribed proper sphere, is more important than her "Writings"; but in keeping with Boyd's feminism, it also implies that communion among women is more important than political and print culture identifications. A unified front is crucial when the "Coxcomb Croud" stands by gleefully to affirm misogyny. As case in point, Richard Savage profited by the Haywood-Sansom feud by publishing a poem on the dichotomous modes of "unfeminine" female satire and gentle self-deprecating lyric poetry.

The male and especially the female writers Boyd selects as role models indicate that, apart from the sentimental impulse in the "Macareus to Æolus," *Variety* consciously aligns itself with and attempts to (re)validate the bolder participants in a Restoration culture. This was not only unusual; it also indicates that Boyd was conscious of deliberate moral

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[39] Elsewhere in the poem "blur" connotes the sullied reputations of promiscuous women.

and artistic projects that set out to reform tastes in the early part of the century, and that she dissented from this popular opinion. Carol Barash observes that with first Anne Finch and then other women, political conflicts are submerged in a female voice as ideally emotional rather than political and religious. ('Introduction,' *English Women's Poetry*). Boyd wished to realize other modes than the lyric in order to challenge the assumption of linguistic difference. In fact, the very premise of *Variety* is to locate resistance (political and sexual-political) in the ultra public and market-based, essentially the grub-street text. For Boyd recognized that for a less privileged professional writer, neither a topical nor a personal metaphoric withdrawal into the psychological or private sphere is a marketable position. Instead, she inscribes performance--popular entertainment, personae, political scandal--into her text as fuel for public opinion. Non-commitment to evoked political issues and opinions, and praise of saleable amusements (and authors) marks both Boyd and her text as very public rather than private property.

This confident approach to a market economy inspires Boyd to replace devalued personifications of Luxury and Fortune (female abstractions that often preside over a fluctuating marketplace in Augustan literature), with the more auspicious personified "Variety." The instabilities of the emerging capitalist system are also embodied by delightfully human figures of fancy, perhaps reflecting Boyd's positive take on the material reality of a significant female presence in Grub Street and Exchange Alley: the female producer and the female consumer of literary texts. For example, *Variety* opens with a mock epistolary prologue sent from a "hand unknown" or from the parodic Octavia who is an effective literalization of marketing values and relentless consumerism. She resembles the stereotype of the privileged coquette, in the tradition of Centlivre's Lady Reveller or

Pope's Belinda, but also the "Punk and Poetess" who is as incorrigibly sexual as she is erudite.

Unlike Boyd's other speakers, from *Variety* or elsewhere, Octavia declares herself a parodic alter-ego of sorts for the author. As well as the admirable classical Octavia, her name suggests octavos and octaves, and she solicits an authorship that is equally performative and opportunistic with herself. This "roving fair's" promiscuous affections symbolise the projected success of the young female author's participation in the circulation of popular print, as Octavia offers Boyd "conquering Arms" to win "glorious Palms" and "lasting Friendship": fame or at least remuneration for tickling the temporary fancies of the town. She writes,

> Make me, blind Cupid, ev'ry thing that's soft:
> See how those Eyes my warm Desires so waft!
> Just don't mistake, 'tis not for you alone,
> Nor him, nor t'other, when the former's gone,
> Black, brown, or fair let my *Adonis* be,
> Tis charming CHANGE, tho' Consanguinity,
> Brother, or Friend, so 'tis a vary'd thing:
> We ever court what's ever on the Wing.
> LOVISA, a lovely Maid, is of my Mind:
> VARIETY to ev'ry Wretch is kind:
> The roving Fair loves CHANGE as well as I,
> And all her Theme is still VARIETY:
> She, young, thro' Fortune's various Windings trod,

And bows to CHANGE her ever-pleasing God.

There is an irony in a female responding to male changeability. Octavia from "Pall Mall" allows identification of collective female interest that transcends social order, as Boyd pays tribute to her projected fashionable clients. The audacity of Boyd's muse also suggests what Ros Ballaster terms the "ostentatious staging"of female authorship. (*Seductive Forms*, 268) Her character implies a self-conscious decision on the author's part to market and to celebrate the female producer and consumer of ephemera as the necessary mechanisms of London trade.

Anticipating the *Dunciad*'s anxiety about the perceived feminization and levelling of cultural products, Octavia also laughs at the professional man's vigilant protection of the production and interpretation of culture signs by imagining the reception of her poem by the clerical world, a poetical visualisation technique shared by contemporaries such as Mary Barber and Mary Leapor. Octavia's foil, the unfashionable and indignant scholar, is something of a shared target among eighteenth-century poets: from Alicia D'Anvers's *Academia: or the Humours of the University of Oxford* to the well-known Scriblerian satires, to Mary Barber's fusty reverend in "The Conclusion of a Letter to the Rev. Mr. C," and to Jane West's later eighteenth-century satire of collegians who study only the dead in "To the Hon. Mrs. C[ockayne]." After worshipping at the altars of "Variety" and "Change," imaged as pagan pilgrimages to foreign climes, Octavia taunts,

> Yon pious Gownman shakes his holy Head,
> And asks what the Devil bred th' inglorious Maid.
> Harkee, young Canon, one Word in your Ear;
> Draw close--it must be whispered, reverend Dear,

'Tis not so strange, my Prelate, nor uncommon--

D'ye fly me, Sir!--Octavia's but a Woman.

An ironic and not a little defiant warning hinges on "but a Woman": Octavia as merely another powerless female or ineffectual 'woman' hack, as her critics would have it, or 'woman' as principal representative of fresh and compelling political, economic, and artistic practises.

Either connotation, really, implies criticism of classical, male-centred models of higher education and defies familiar satires of intellectual women and proposed schemes of formal female education. Until 1730 all university dons were beneficed priests, and ordination into priest's orders in the Anglican Church was confined to men with Oxford and Cambridge degrees, metonymically widening Boyd's targeted "Gownman," member of the clerical profession and member of a university, to learning of an institutional and academic nature. All of Boyd's substantial texts express some ambivalence towards the universities. As inaccessible as they were to her academically, they were promising marketing agents. After all, approval and patronage of students and dons helped both Mary Davys and Jane Barker to recognition. Boyd herself includes a letter from a student in her novel *The Female Page*, as an affirmation of sorts. But university "dons" and collegians also crop up in her later works as fools and reduced noblemen, all of whom are steered by party spleen and more interested in alchemic resurrections of dead poets than in lessening the hardships of live ones.

An anonymous writer, the "Amorous Lady," as she is referred to by her editor in the 1730's, wrote "On being Charged with Writing Incorrectly." "I'm incorrect: the learned say / That I write well, but not their way. / For this to every star I bend: / From their dull

method heaven defend." *Variety's* portraits of weak, judgmental or, in Octavia's mind, "jealous" academics also seem to retaliate against gender and class-anxious attitudes which repress women's natural talents and teach them to conceal their interests and abilities.[40] In Swift's *Cadenus to Vanessa,* published shortly before *Variety*, Vanessa cheats Pallas, goddess of intelligence, into giving her wits. Boyd's Pallas is freer of misogyny than Swift's. The poet asks simply, "Assist me *Pallas*, hide me with thy Shield" (60).[41]

More ambivalent than Boyd's treatment of the university don is her depiction of the "Dons of wit" (63), or respected male authors, which involves a complex interplay of compliment, self-depreciation, irony, and even insult. She prefaces her Second Canto with a facetious apology for the "liberty" she must take with "the Brothers of the Pen" (34): the "liberty" of literary allusion, which as Brean Hammond points out, disallows critical attempts which would deprive the writer of honorific status of allusion, but more implicitly the "liberty" of criticism of those who might underrate her imaginative efforts. (Hammond, 21) Boyd jests, "you'll observe where I thought my own Sense not pertinant enough, I've borrow'd of my Neighbours, for Variety's Sake, which, I conceive, a Judge will distinguish without a Marginal-Note. As for the more nice, than just Gentlemen, are good-natur'd enough, to call the whole Piece a Robbery, I shall only beg leave to say, genteely, they Lye--under a Mistake" (34).

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[40]Boyd's claims for female learning were shared by male and female artists alike; but emboldened by a pseudonym and possibly inexperience, she is certainly more defiant than most contemporaneous "projectors" of women's education and defenders of women's publishing. Whether it was approached satirically or compliantly, the anticipated contempt, envy and hatred for the 'bookish' women forms a major topos in early eighteenth-century poetry.

[41]Boyd observes of beauty,"We beg the Gift, and when we have it snore; / Unknow our Riches, dull ungrateful Men; . . . Too much unworth; permit me, Queen, to skip; Minerva's Beauties bear right strenuous Force; / that prudent Goddess may I ever course; . . . Let trayt'rous Venus storm by Force the Field: / There's Witchcraft in a Person; we're inclind / Too much, too very much to wrong the Mind" (60)

Conclusion

In light of *Variety*'s initial allegiance to commercial writing that takes its chances with the public, it is somewhat of a puzzle that its author would devote succeeding years and poetic energies to writing for the Court (not to mention soliciting the opinions of university men). As things stood in 1727, however, the King made it difficult for women writers to garner any of their literary authority (or bread) from monarchical structures. The overarching structure of *Variety* provides evidence of Boyd's initial struggle to construct mythical and moral continuity between her own literary activities and those of the past: writers for the stage, polemical-romance writers, and also those Stuart female poets who claimed political and linguistic authority through court rituals and communities of aristocratic women.[42] Thus Boyd must come round in the final stages of the poem to the position of the modern female writer in relation to Court.

By seeming to privilege Queen Anne over King George in *Variety,* Boyd participates in an oblique communication of opposition sympathy but also of inherited female poetic and political community.[43] Reflecting on the partisanship and corruption of her own age Boyd longs for the late court: "Oh, lovely *Anna*, everlasting Glory! / Where Bloom, Wit, Beauty, make a learned Story" (69); and in case her partisanship is not plain:

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[42]See Greer, Germaine et al, eds. *Kissing the Rod: An Anthology of Seventeenth-Century Women's Poetry.* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993); Barbara McGovern, *Anne Finch and Her Poetry: A Critical Biography* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press); Linda Levy Peck, *The Mental World of the Jacobean Court* (Cambridge: CUP, 1991); Moira Ferguson, *First Feminists: British Women Writers 1678-1799* (Bloomington IN: Indiana University and Feminist Press, 1985); Carol Barash, *English Women's Poetry 1649-1714*; Hilda Smith, ed. *Women Writers and the Early Modern British Political Tradition* (Cambridge: CUP, 1998); Lois G Schwoerer, "Images of Queen Mary II 1689-1695," *Renaissance Quarterly* 42.4 (1989): 717-748.

[43]Anne's reign was not without its Marlboroughs or Godolphins, but consensus was that Anne periodically made her sovereignty felt.

"What am I doing---what is't I wou'd say," "I see my Crime, too bold was my rash Dare" (70). Boyd evokes the iconographic ("Story") supremacy of the female ruler as it was established by the previous generation of female poets who sought authorization through the martial, maternal, and female authority of the Queen.

This would be a posture that Boyd would find troubling–one that she would return to periodically in the 1730's but which she would ultimately discard. She would always have the vantage of historical hindsight: the Queen died heirless, mourning, diseased, and manipulated by her intimate female friends. In *Variety* Anne's embattled body (painfully "large swell'd" with futile childbearing) can only become a figure for Boyd's own polemic and literary contest and, ultimately, her marginal status: her "light pinion'd" and "too unthinking" (70) muse. The Georgian female poet cannot define her poetic voice or political legitimacy in relation to female monarchic authority; George I locked his wife away on the continent and disempowered his daughter-in-law, Princess Caroline. Boyd, therefore, can only irreverently define herself against the linguistic authority of masculinist political writers, particularly the Whig opposition to Anne, who described the Queen in hyperbolically feminine terms. Boyd calls attention to gendered assumptions about female discourse and authority by projecting the perceived vulnerable reproductive body of the Queen onto the source of her negative iconographic status, that is onto the heated imaginations of the poet who maligns her with "wanton Quill," "conflux'd, odoriferous Charms," and "moister Wet" (70).

Six years later Boyd would have some success constructing an imagined female-centred community around (then) Queen Caroline and her daughters. But as her propagandist and histrionic imagery portends, the new economy of rumour and gossip

(carried by poets "who lye for starving" [68]) would replace lyric foundations built on the virtue, "honour," and "Pomp" of a distant "Court" and its closeted "Kingdom" (69). If Boyd could not move in illustrious circles, as Anne Finch, Katherine Philips, Anne Killigrew, or Mary Chudleigh had, or as she wryly notes, John Gay the "charming Fellow" currently does, she would go to the public. The "impartial Man's Esteem's a big Reward" (33).

There is some incremental evidence in *Variety* to suggest that Boyd read and repaid Swift's anti-feminist satire, "The Furniture of a Woman's Mind," which was written and possibly circulated as a broadside in Ireland the year of Boyd's publication. Of course it is not impossible that Swift actually echoed lines found at the end of Canto one of Boyd's poem.[44] Either way, one of the goals of "Furniture," it seems, was to impart dominant attitudes towards female disputants, as England entered into a long period of greater restrictions on women's participation in political discourse. In the final lines of his poem, Swift yokes the female bookseller with market-based and polemical texts and non-elite political utterance, claiming Mrs Harding, Dublin publisher, has his permission to publish ephemera which "may out-sell a better thing; / So, Holla Boys; god save the King." In fact Swift offers an abridgement of the personae whom Boyd hyperbolizes and reifies in her own poem: the feisty parson-scared and loquacious coquette, the female scandal-monger, the Party woman, and the female merchant. In short, politically-conscious women who were rapidly becoming outdated, and these are the women whom Boyd playfully exalts.

Given her stated commercial and political goals, Boyd was likely disappointed that

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[44]No copy of the 1727 broadside has been traced. Possibly the poem was among those that Pope cut from the *Pope-Swift Miscellanies*, late in 1726, and it was independently circulated by Swift. The sale of copyright of Boyd's poem was sold in April, early in the year and possibly before Swift's.

her great effort with *Variety* neither made her famous nor, probably, even met her financial needs. She rounds out the second Canto with her hopes for the future: "Whilom the World, not College, makes his [the public speaker's] Glory: / So I —you understand me, but good by t'ye, / A sequel, better, if I can, I'll write you" (72). *Variety* would not become a 'dominant' text, nor would it have the public clamouring for more. At most, it may have brought in minimal funds and amused some powerful people who, as we shall see, agreed to help Boyd along her career path. (In this, the poem met the less lustrous plans of its author.) As *Variety* stands (waits rather) for modern readers, however, it is something more than a curiosity. It has been the first of Boyd's poems to be cited as worthy of transcription and publication,[45] though it still warrants further study for its many political opinions and contexts. Apart from Boyd's last published work, it is the only one of her texts written independently of a patron or a political party. It is intricate and deliberative. It explores, even promotes, a range of personalities that women *could* manufacture as social and political positions. It aims to be tactless and incorrect (a rare attribute in women's writing), and as it was innovative for its time, so it should refresh our ongoing recovery of the genres, styles, and opinions that were available to early modern women writers.

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[45] It has been published (unabridged) online. Elizabeth Boyd, *Variety*, (London , 1727) *Brown Women Writers Project*, Brown University, Internet.

Chapter Three: Patronage and the Political Novel

I have computed the Expense of Writing to a Great Man, as under

	£	s	d
For Pen, Ink, and Paper,	0	0	11/2
For a Person to Find when his Lordship is at Home,	0	1	0
To the Porter,	0	10	6
To the Valet,	1	1	0
To the Foot Man who brings the Answer	0	5	0
	1	17	71/5

Laetitia Pilkington, *Memoirs of Laetitia Pilkington*

The specific business ventures that Boyd launched during the three-year publication lull after *Variety* are unknowable, but clues point to one objective: the pursuit of Whig patronage and its promising ties with the publishing world. For a time after 1727 she may have lived off the predicted "Meagre proceeds" of her poem and continued in some traditional line of labour; one source even hints at the "Needle's vulgar Task."[1] However, around 1730 rumours of her ambitions, youth, poverty, and illness inspired the individual efforts of at least seven identifiable (though conceivably more) titled benefactors. By the time her novel, *The Happy-Unfortunate: Or, The Female Page,* was published in 1732, she had accrued an astounding four hundred and eleven subscribers to

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[1]"To the ingenious Author of the Happy Unfortunate, or, the Female-Page; when labouring under a tedious Fit of Sickness," by Musidorus at Grey's Inn, Feb. the 26th 1732. (*FP*) Cecilia Macheski observes that 'needlework' implied "the broadest range of occupations from spinning yarn and weaving fabric to the making of clothing and household goods to such ornamental and fashionable pursuits as lacemaking, beadwork, and embroidery." (86) It was used figuratively by Pope and Dryden to signify Penelope's cunning and chastity, but Musidorus's choice description, "vulgar," points to a more literal meaning: work that is antithetical to creative expression. "Penelope's Daughter's: Images of Needlework in Eighteenth-Century Literature," *Fetter'd or Free: British Women Novelists 1670-1815,* ed. Mary Anne Schofield and Cecilia Macheski (Athen, Ohio: Ohio UP, 1986) 85-101.

the work, virtually the entire Whig Ministry, as well as some Tory notables.[2] Multiple and fluid co-operations with noble men and women in the early 1730's enabled Boyd to print one of the most successful early subscription publications of the first half of the eighteenth century.[3]

Within a five-year span after the publication of *Variety* Boyd had secured the subscriptions of virtually all of the powerful people in the empire, including the wider-ranging and individual efforts of William Stanhope, 2nd Earl of Harrington, Secretary of State for the Northern Department; Lionel Cranfield Sackville, 1st Duke of Dorset and Governor General of Ireland; and Frances Hertford, Countess (later Duchess) of Somerset, prominent patron of early writers. Close examination of Boyd's "Proposals for Printing by Subscription A Novel" and of her final subscription list suggests that Court circles, including possibly the aforementioned people, were actually active in the sale of the four hundred and thirty-six copies, at five shillings a piece. (This is a reminder of just how close-knit and far-reaching patronage could become if "Such-a-one" [*FP*] took an interest.) They reveal that the titled probably distributed her prospectus and collected

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[2] *The Happy-Unfortunate; or, the Female-Page: A Novel in Three Parts* (London, 1732) was reissued in 1737 and reprinted with an introduction by William Graves (New York: Garland Publishing Company, 1972). The prominent first readers are too innumerable to list but they included the extended families and connections of Boyd's patron families: Cowper, Leeds, Mordaunt, Russel, and Spencer. Others of interest were William Anne (van Keppel), Earl of Albermarle, Lord of the Bedchamber; John and Mary (Lepell) Hervey; Anne Vane, Maid of Honour (mistress of Hervey, Harrington and Frederick, Prince of Wales); Selina Hastings, Countess Huntingdon and (later) famous Wesleyan; Catherine (Hyde) Douglas, Duchess of Queensbury; Mary Scott, Countess of Deloraine; Thomas Pelham Holles; Thomas Pelham-Holles, Duke of Newcastle, great wielder of government patronage; George Bubb Doddington, Lord of the Treasury; Charles, Duke of Grafton, Lord Chamberlain; Sarah Duchess of Richmond and Lennox, Lady of the Bedchamber and wife of Whig grandee, Duke of Richmond; Isabella Finch, Lady of the Bedchamber; and Charlotte West, Baroness De La Warr, patron of Elizabeth Thomas and Lewis Theobald. Tory subscribers form a conspicuous minority.

[3] For a discussion of trends in subscription printing, including a list of all women's novels printed by subscription in the eighteenth century see Cheryl Turner, Appendix, *Living By the Pen: Women Writers of the Eighteenth Century* (London: Routledge, 1994).

names at Court and in the country, among their friends and family members, and even among their more exalted household appointees.[4] The published lists and Boyd's ensuing commentary on them also suggest a combined initiative that saw overlap of Court and commercial realms, including Boyd's strategic positioning of her subscriptions for sale at fashionable businesses near her own and her publisher's residences,[5] as well as her soliciting of nobility in her own neighbourhood near Leicester Square.[6]

Charitable ventures, especially those that helped the object of beneficence into self-sufficiency were fashionable at this time at Court. Other timely rescues included Queen Caroline's interest in Stephen Duck, Walpole's patronage of Thomas Gordon's translation of Tacitus, and Lord Hervey's promotion of Dr. Conyers Middleton's history of Cicero. If Boyd collected all of the moneys owed ("Half a Crown on the delivery of the Book in Sheets" and "Half a Crown" before), she certainly would have been able to meet her business objectives: to raise enough capital to set up her own pamphlet shop out of her home in George Court. In the 'Preface' to her novel Boyd addresses her reader with a disingenuous statement:

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[4] Several of the Royal Physicians and their families subscribed, as did the mistresses of the wardrobe. It seems common for subscribers to recommend the work to their immediate family members, especially it seems to siblings and daughters. Subscriptions to multiple copies also seems to be usual in charitable enterprises, as Boyd's patrons subscribe to as many as six copies.

[5] Very early in 1732 (January or early February), or perhaps even earlier, Boyd published the prospectus, "Proposals for Printing by Subscription A Novel. Entitled The Happy-Unfortunate; or the Female Page. In three parts. By Louisa." (It was probably circulated some time before the estimated 1732, as actual publication was delayed.) Subscribers were to send to "Mr Wylder's coachmaker" in Brewer Street, "near Golden Square," or to the German coffee house, listed in deCastro's MS *Dictionary of Taverns* as advertising in the *Daily Journal* and *The Craftsman* in the early 1730's. It was located in St James's street, celebrated for its coffee and chocolate houses. "Proposals" probably included eminent names as an inducement to subscribe.

[6] Juliana, Duchess of Leeds, to whom Boyd would later address a poem (*HM*), lived in Leicester Street, as did Isabella, Duchess of Manchester, Lady Sanderson, and Anne (Bridges) Onslow, the wife of famous speaker of the house, Arthur Onslow.

> As I never was ambitious of the Name of Author, nor even design'd to indulge my inclinations in writing any thing of this Nature more than for my own Amusement. I have printed this manuscript, (which otherwise I never had done) with a View of settling my self in a Way of Trade; that may enable me to master those Exigencies of Fortune, which my long Illness hath for some Time past reduc'd me to suffer; That I may be capable of providing for my now ancient, indulgent Mother.

She goes on to list the kinds of stationary goods that she will "directly sell" and to ask her patrons to be her future customers.

Despite this subdued interest in fame (wildly contrasting with *Variety's* clear aspirations), Boyd also claims inspiration from her female "Muse." She had been advertising her "ambitious Verse"in occasional poems, which were likely unsolicited, in the years between the major publications of *Variety* and *The Female Page*. Put simply, she wrote flattery for noble families and they then helped her to money, introductions, and eventually a novel subscription. Incentives for offering patronage in cases such as Boyd's seem largely charitable and primarily unmotivated by political considerations. Certainly in these patronage poems Boyd hints at her privations, yet the themes of these encomiastic works also reinforce particular political stances and seek official approval from those near the centre of power. By the early 1730's patronage for most writers was fundamentally linked to party concerns. Sundt Urstad claims, for example, that Hervey made emendations to Middleton's works, "which allowed him to discreetly oversee the political contents." Presumably this participatory approach would enable patrons to advertise the work as consistent with party line. Sundt Urstad also notes that a "general

hardening of attitudes had . . . long been under way, and by Walpole's time writers patronized by the government had become . . . politically accountable"(*Sir Robert Walpole's Poets*, 72-75). In fact, many of the circumstances that initially lead one to read Boyd's novel independently of patron's policies and governmental commitments are the very things that made her vulnerable to these pressures: her gender, poverty, and general obscurity.

The ensuing chapter will affirm what has already been suspected by critics, that "there were fewer benefits [a patron] could confer upon [a woman writer] than upon a man." After all, a "woman in the eighteenth century would not be named private secretary to a peer, or set up as a political journalist, or appointed to a church living."[7] However, events leading up to Boyd's offerings of gratitude (and "Stationary Goods") after the novel publication, as well as her continued involvement in political publishing throughout the 1730's, suggest that the projects she undertook as a government "hireling" and her aesthetic and remunerative goals as artist and business woman were not self-sufficient.[8] Rather they were gradually integrated and rendered interdependent by Walpole's propaganda machine. Boyd in fact began by patterning her career like any other servant of that administration, by becoming a protégée of Whig lords and by writing in defence of the succession and the ministry. Initially she may have begun the amatory fiction *The Happy Unfortunate; or the Female Page* for fame and for the perceived income of romance writers, but once she attached herself to the powerful Whig

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[7]Dustin Griffin also observes that further study of women and the role of patronage (women as patrons and as authors) is needed. Introduction, *Literary Patronage in England, 1650-1800* (Cambridge: CUP, 1996).

[8] The 1737 reprint of the novel included the 1732 glossy subscription list. Publishers may have hoped it would lure a derivative middling audience into purchasing the novel that their 'betters' had subscribed to five years earlier.

enclave, she had signed on to reify ministerial authority. The only satisfactory outcome could be a subscription publication which possibly underwent patronage revision and supervision, to see that it met the Whig economy of indebtedness and political "accountability." The novel was a woman writer's counterpart to the governmental rewards of sinecures and posts reserved for men; but in the same respect, the charitable woman hireling could no more avoid a political "reckoning" than a man could.

Remarkably from within this fenced territory of amatory romance and governmental interests, Boyd undertook to carve out a niche for women in the new bureaucracy. She saw a market in the propagandist authentication of the very preferments and court interests that anti-ministerial sentiment lampooned. And what better vehicle to lend this authenticity than the female-authored novel, which had increasingly come to imply the corruptions and petticoat rule of Hanoverian ministry?

"The happiest Island, and the greatest King"

Although fiction writing reached a peak of popularity towards the end of the 1720's, Boyd may not have had romance writing, pamphlet selling, or trade in mind when she initially engaged the efforts of key Whig families with her encomiastic writing in the two or three years preceding the novel's publication in 1732. A poetic accolade from an unknown at Gray's-Inn follows the *Female Page's* impressive list of nobles. It praises Boyd as though she is a Hanoverian bard:

> Transported, we have heard your warbling Lays,
> Exulting rise, and charm with Dorset's Praise;
> -

Or else, when soaring with a bolder Wing,

With Homer's Flame, to Majesty you sing.

At first glance this overstates the ambitions of the author to "sing" before royalty, as professional poets recited Homer or even inspired kings, as the *Iliad* had reputedly inspired Alexander the Great.[9] Specifically and just as extraordinary for the young author was Boyd's 1730 presentation of a birthday poem to King George II. Under "Musick, Poetry, and Books of Entertainment," the *Monthly Chronicle* records "Verses most humbly inscrib'd to his Majesty King George II. On his Birth Day; and presented on the Birth-Night, by Elizabeth Boyd" (Nov 1730). A clue to how this female poet, having merely "publish'd several poetical Pieces," secured the prestigious but intimidating and possibly even expensive honour of attending Court may be located in the passage's reference to Lionel Cranfield Sackville, Duke of Dorset.

Throughout the 1730's the Duke hired minor poets to perform individual odes and musical compositions, primarily for Queen Caroline on her birthday.[10] The death of laureate Laurence Eusden in late September 1730 may have necessitated a hasty official birthday poem (George II's birthday was 30 October), which Dorset then commissioned from Boyd. If this was the case, Boyd was the only woman ever appointed for this formal presentation. If the occasion was not so formal, which is the more likely scenario,

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[9] James D. Garrison writes that the tension in panegyric writing between what is heard and what is written (publicy rhetorical and privately read) is not all print related. In Greek tradition panegyric was intended to be read to "a mass audience on a festive occasion," but this was often not the reality (6). *Dryden and the Tradition of Panegyric* (Berkley: U of California P, 1975)

[10] Minor talents, William Bisset, Michael Creagh, William Dunkin, and Samuel Shepherd, all performed for royal birthdays "By special Command of His Grace Duke of Dorset." The majority of performances were presented "at the castle of Dublin" on the Queen's birthday, but Dorset resided in London before his appointment to Ireland 19 June 1730. The Duke's predecessor (after a break in succession) was Charles Sackville, friend and patron of both Prior and Dryden.

it was an unofficial offering that was still a coup for the poor, unknown writer. It would have required prior permission from a noble benefactor who then may have interceded on Boyd's behalf to the Duke of Newcastle or at least steered her through the proper patronage channels for revision before she obtained consent to publish or go before the King. The poem points to subsequent revision after the occasion: that Boyd had read it to the King, and he had "calmed" her "Fears" and "deigned to listen."[11]

Outside of its acknowledgement of poetic competition among the "tuneful Throng" and those of "learned Merit" (all vying for the privilege of being rescued from "Despair"), "Verses Most Humbly Inscrib'd to His Majesty" is an unremarkable display of hyperbole. It does seem to privilege Caroline, as Boyd would continue to do throughout the 1730's; it was evident early on that little would be expected from George.[12] The poem proceeds with political temerity, yet offers what Peter F. Heaney describes as a kind of conditional flattery: praise as "subtly-erected framework for advice and even admonition offered to the monarch."[13] This includes the poet's appeal for "milder Virtue" and her claim that "Heaven" rescued the nation from "Britannia's Foes" (the Pretender, Tories, the Pope), as well as from "Faction" (opposition to the Whigs). The poem's evasion of the sore point of monarchical legitimacy (Hanoverian succession)

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[11] As the Lord Chamberlain, Charles Fitzroy, Duke of Grafton, would have been responsible for finding a temporary replacement for this occasion. (He later subscribed to two copies of Boyd's novel.) The Duke of Newcastle also, however, performed this intermediary function, and the Earl of Harrington who had a continuing interest in Boyd also would have had the opportunity to act as emissary. Lewis Burrough, for one, performed an ode for the King's birthday in 1747 "by special command of Harrington" (ESTC).

[12] Political authority in an artistic work of this time could not be seen as arising primarily from any system of mythical or heroical status or vigour, at least not with any degree of ease or seriousness. A fairly common consensus among historians is that there was not much about George II as an individual that was viewed as heroic, though painters and sculptors attempted to portray him as such.

[13] Peter F. Heaney, "The Laureate Dunces and the Death of the Panegyric," *Early Modern Studies* 5.1 (May 1999): 4-24.

is tactfully if somewhat humourously evaded, as Boyd seems to suggest that George was immaculately conceived by "Heaven's high King" and marked to save all "Mankind." This passing over of George's mortal paternity may have pleased the King.

Boyd's patrons may have helped her to see the importance of presenting the public with a positive image of monarchy by praising the events leading up to the Hanoverian succession, emphasizing the menace of political and religious dissidence, and portraying individual members of the royal family as benevolent, intelligent, and deserving.[14] At this historical moment the road to publication was made much smoother if an author could initially obtain the good will, advice, and permission to print from the prominent politicians close to Walpole. Boyd's lyric for the King was but one of five of her encomiastic publications in 1730-31, indicative of the lingering significance of patronage and of this woman's sense of inclusion in the speculative investment in the government and its profits.

Other potential benefactors addressed in Boyd's occasional poems were Diana Spencer and John Russel; William, 2nd Earl Cowper and his sisters, Anne and Sarah; and William Stanhope, 1st Lord Harrington.[15] Compliments for birthdays,

[14] In this Boyd's ideas were as formulaic as her expressions. For studies of similar verse strategies see Sundt Urstad, "'The Best of Princes': The Royal Family in Pro-Government Works," *Sir Robert Walpole's Poets*, 156-172; Alexander Pettit, "Lord Bolingbroke's Remarks on the History of England and the Rhetoric of Political Controversy," *The Age of Johnson* 7 (1996): 365-95; Alfred James Henderson, *London and the National Government 1721-1742: A Study in City Politics and the Walpole Administration* (Durham NC: Duke UP, 1945); and James Alan Downie, *Robert Harley and the Press: Propaganda and Public Opinion in the Age of Swift and Defoe* (Cambridge: CUP, 1979).

[15] Lord John Russel, 4th Duke of Bedford, and Lady Diana Spencer were married in 1731. The *GM* reads, "He has a fortune of 30, 000 down, and is to have 100, 000 at the Death of the Dutchess Dowanger of Marlborough, her Grandmother," Oct 1731. The Duchess had planned in 1727 to marry her granddaughter to Frederick, Prince of Wales but Walpole interfered. Diana was the daughter of Anne Churchill and Charles, 3rd Earl of Sunderland, who was one of the principal secretaries in the reigns of Queen Anne and King George I. Her stepmother, Judith Tichborne, the Countess of Sunderland, and her brother, John Spencer (MP "of Marlbro' house"), also subscribed to the *FP*. Russel would later lead a faction of Whig politicians, the Bedford group, against Walpole. Later the Russels became patrons of Sarah Fielding.

marriages, travels, and recoveries from illness may have been repaid by presents of money. Thus what began as supplications for small gifts eventually may have alerted Boyd to the latent possibilities of webs of patronage support obtained through occasional poetry but also through propagandist and Party compositions.

Initially Boyd's patronage poems strive for comparison with the early Hanoverian poets: not, as she had dreamed in *Variety,* to reestablish *vers de société* written at the courts of James II, Charles II, Henrietta Maria or Mary of Modena, nor yet to emulate the romantic propagandist texts of Manley or Haywood, as her novel would. Alternatively in "Verses Congratulatory on the Happy Marriage of th Right Honourable Lady Diana Spencer with the Lord John Russel" (1731), Boyd compares herself with two former Whig writers, Congreve and Addison, who reaped financial benefits simply for their declarations of sympathy for the Whig party in the years after the succession:

> O, that like Addison, I could excell,
> With SPENCER's Praise the nervous Page should swell!
> Or, as sweet warbling Congreves Lyre, rehearse
> The heavenly MARLBRO in Heroic verse[16]

Once again she makes conventional promises to "sing" the families' praises (primarily Diana's) as a line of "Loyal, bold Patriots, Faithful, Just and Wise." Larger political allegiances form a backdrop for protestations of service and loyalty to the individual families. The classical theme of the poem is greatness (beauty and valour), achieved through service to one's king. This was what the couple's ancestors accomplished--

[16] Addison wrote 'The Campaign" to celebrate Marlborough's (Diana's grandfather's) victory of Blenheim. He was so liked by the Whigs that he was named Vice Commissioner of Appeals and later Under Secretary of State. Congreve was patronized by Sarah Duchess of Marlborough and was a Whig who benefitted from sinecure offices and a substantial income.

"MARLBRO," "GODOLPHIN," and "BRIDGEWATER."[17] The task of connecting this nuptial with the hireling tasks of vindicating, elevating, and finally deifying Hanoverian succession is helped by the "blisful pair's" timely marriage. They were married on "October 11, 1731, his present Majesty King George's Coronation." The poet urges, "all hail, auspicious Day, / Smile as tho' Kings were crown'd with Aspect gay." Essentially Boyd yokes these "lovely, blooming Offspring," of a long line of Protestant heroes, with the somewhat less inspiring King. As Sundt Urstad writes, "it was of course very important for pro-government writers to present the public with positive images of the monarchy and justify the right of the Hanoverians to the British throne" (158-9).

Without exception, Boyd includes an epigraph before each of her works as a successful intertext of the same genre, and sometimes as a marker of political leaning to help her readership negotiate her opinions. Generally her political poems contain epigraphs taken from popular stage successes or poems that signal loyalty and heighten propagandist effect. Their authors are always of some political and financial dependence and they too, Boyd seems to say, wrote encomiastic poetry to the King and lent support to the Whigs, for which they were rewarded with posts, public endorsements, and livings. "A Poem on the Arrival of the Right Honourable Wiliam Earl Cowper After a Dangerous Illness Against his Birth-Day" (1730), for example, parallels Prior's flattery of King William and Boyd's advice to the young noble William: "His opener Years, to ripened manhood bring / And see the Hero Perfect." Prior turned Tory, but was made Gentleman

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[17] Scroop Egerton, 1st Duke of Bridgewater, had married Diana's aunt and Marlborough's daughter, Elizabeth Churchill. He was Chamberlain to Princess Caroline 1714-17.

of the Bedchamber to William and was both a poet and a courtier.[18] Likewise the poem to King George cites John Hughes's *Seige of Damascus*. Hughes had been made secretary to the commissions of the peace by leading Whig politician, 1st lord chancellor of England, William Cowper.

If Boyd was uncertain of just where her submissive appeals would take her in these early publications, she shows a willingness and capacity for devoting her services to the Ministry. Her inconsistent use of pseudonymous publication may be code for her growing political awareness. If King George and the Russels were to be publicly praised for rewarding the destitute "Elizabeth Boyd," William Cowper, 2nd Earl Cowper and William Stanhope, 2nd Earl of Harrington were to be praised by "Louisa" for their service to state.[19] By not using her own name, Boyd may have been suggesting that her very obscurity made her suitable to write for the government; certainly "Louisa" had taken on political significations in *Variety*. Or Boyd may have been protecting her identity at the same time that she signalled that the contents of the works were partisan. (Presumably she submitted her manuscript poems for approval under her own name and then published under a pseudonym.)

The specific patrons Boyd selected were virtually all young politicians entering into government service, each a "rising Hero" who was about to or had recently received

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[18] William Earl Cowper was on the continent and returned after an illness in 1730. He would become Lord of the Bedchamber in 1733. He and his sisters, Sarah and Ann, would subscribe to to *FP*.

[19] The timing of the publication of "To the right honourable William lord Harrington, on his late return from Paris" (1730) strengthens the supposition that Harrington was somehow involved in the birthday presentation to King George. He corresponded with Newcastle at this time and had been created Baron Harrington of Harrington earlier in the year before returning to Soissons to continue negotiations at the congress of Aix-la-Chapelle. *(DNB,* vol 18, 927-31). He must have been generous to Boyd who continued to write his praises into the 1740's. Despite his various government appointments, only three other writers (Michael Clancy, Charles Lucas, and James Miller) addressed works to him, of whom Boyd was the first and most enduring.

a government appointment. Notably none of these young men was (as yet) immediately recognizable as the patron of poets: Boyd wished to initiate them or she privileged the courtier over the literati. (All were political hopefuls of varying clout with ties to party.) Boyd must have actively pursued these contacts after she had read learned encomiastic traditions and researched lines of command and family histories. This information was available in the popular press, but also required inventiveness to construct appealing futures for these unpractised courtiers--such as, "His County's Guard" and "Darling of his Prince."

Boasts of a 'feminine' muse and the use of a feminine pseudonym indicate that three years after the publication of *Variety* Boyd did not see her gender as a bar to government patronage or political opinion, though she continues to beg protection for her youth and proclaim "artless" intentions and "humble" means. If she initially favoured male patrons, she would eventually be drawn to a number of women, many of whom were daughters, wives, mothers, and mothers-in-law of Old Corps Whigs. Appended to the poem to William Cowper is "To the Right Honourable Ladies SARAH and ANNE COWPER, On Their Noble Entertainment on Earl Cowper's Birth-Day." The sisters (both in their teens), marked to continue the beneficence of their illustrious parents,[20] may have commissioned this poem from Boyd on the occasion of their brother's expected arrival from the continent:

View the Fair, hospitable Charmers give,

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[20] Their mother, Mary (Clavering) Countess Cowper corresponded with Princess Caroline, became a bedchamber women in 1714, and had some (quiet) influence at Court. She was also a writing woman who kept a diary filled with court intrigues and was praised by poets for her patronage. Their father was Lord Chancellor and a Whig politician, though once accused of Jacobitism.

> With Heav'n Born-joy, and make the Wretched live,
> See blest Bestower's, how the Pris'ner prays;
> Eternal Blessings, and a Length of Days!
> The pining Sick, wast [sic] a warm fervent Sigh,
> And bless their Patron, with uplifted Eye. (2)

At this time Boyd sees the Cowper girls as committed to domestic hospitality and parish charity. They may, however, have done significantly more for her: five Cowpers subscribe the novel and their young niece, Mary Cowper, would be Boyd's fellow member in the Shakespeare's Ladies Club later in the 1730's.

Whatever her initial expectations from these women, Boyd soon found herself writing for others with more pronounced and mature literary leanings. Most notably, Frances Seymour, Countess of Hertford, would read Boyd's novel in manuscript and offer emendations, including it seems, suggestions for a more "virtuous" rendition of the heroine's actions: "Happiness being inconsistent with Guilt."[21] Boyd writes,

> Permit me, Madam, to flatter my self; that as your Ladyship did me the Honour when you subscrib'd to the Novel, to read it in Manuscript, and to give me some little Encouragement to proceed; that my dedication will not displease; as the last Part of my Book, in a more peculiar Manner, claims a Lady's Patronage ('Dedication,' Part III, *FP*).

There is no certainty that the romance novel was the special realm of women in the early

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[21] Frances Seymour, Countess of Hertford, was married to Algernon Seymour, later 7th Duke of Somerset. She was Lady of the Bedchamber to Princess and then Queen Caroline until the royal's death in 1737, and she was a patron of other poets, including James Thomson, Richard Savage, and Isaac Watts. She was a close friend of Elizabeth Rowe and had literary talents herself, though she circulated her works privately in manuscript but would never print.

eighteenth century, as the mass appeal of Manley's *New Atlantis* proves,[22] and yet the overwhelming number of aristocratic and gentry women subscribers to Boyd's 1732 novel suggests that the format was favoured by women, both on their own initiative and at the suggestion of their relatives.

What follows is a description of the tangled plot of a *The Female Page* and a subsequent study of the work as an offshoot of Boyd's polemical-poetical aspirations. Analysis suggests that Boyd's duties as a partisan writer were not curtailed by her gender but steered by one or more of her Whig patrons into a more unobjectionable task for the "Female Pen" ('Preface,' *FP*).

The Happy Unfortunate; or, the Female Page

Despite the Garland publishing company's 1972 reprint of *The Female Page*, it is clear that few critics have read the novel. It was unusually long for its time, even ours, spanning an impressive 350 pages rather than the more common 100, or even the late-century standard of 200 (Turner, *Living by the Pen*, 38). Those who have waded through all three sections and recorded the experience contend that it is a bewildering read. The indomitable early twentieth-century critic B.G. MacCarthy observes that *The Female Page's* aristocratic ethos and artifice is cloying and "melodramatic"; she dismisses it as a "dying gasp of the tradition" of Restoration courtliness:

> Mrs. Elizabeth Boyd united the picaresque and the tale of gallantry in a sorry concoction called *The Female Page* (1737). Its contents

[22] Schofield writes, "The romance genre lends itself to either sex (it is just that historically it was always assumed to be *the* female form). For the romance as quest narrative is not gender specific" (22).

are indicated by its sub-title: *A Genuine and Entertaining History, Relating to some Persons of Distinction. Intermix'd with A Great Variety of affecting Intrigues in Love and Gallantry. Also the remarkable Letters that passed between the several Persons concerned.*[23]

The opinion of the 1972 editor of the novel, William Graves, is favourable by comparison, but he also concedes that the "plot is extremely convoluted . . . . becoming increasingly complicated until it ends anti-climactically." The main plots are "further complicated by inserted tales about the major characters and the concerns of the peripheral figures." Graves is impressed that an author could draw so many sidelines and still keep up enough narrative tension and "vividness" to carry a story ("Introduction").

At the time of the novel's publication in 1732, Boyd herself admitted haste, illness, and disinclination to write "any Thing of this Nature" (Preface, *FP*). Hindsight tells us that she speaks candidly because *The Female Page* was her only attempt at novel writing despite its obvious financial success.[24] The process of writing the novel must have offered creative challenges. Its episodic nature gave Boyd a chance to apply earlier compilation techniques, first seen in *Variety,* to an emerging genre, and it allowed her to invent more unified voices and more sophisticated characters than her earlier verse hybrids had allowed.

Above all else *The Female Page* is a violent and speedy read. It is an aggregate

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[23] B.G. MacCarthy, *The Female Pen: Women Writers and Novelists 1621-1818* (Cork, Ireland: Cork UP, 1944) 231-2. MacCarthy was highly critical of the aristocratic ethos of the most sophisticated of writers, Behn and Haywood included. Boyd's blatant eroticism could not have impressed.

[24] Her subsequent lack of interest could also be explained by Cheryl Turner's statistics: the novel experienced a rapid decline around 1740, which only the indefatigable Haywood survived (52-59). Boyd's ambivalence towards amatory fiction lingered and reemerged as an apology in *DS* (1739) where she entreats, "Forget the Errors of the *Female Page.*" (Prologue)

of decades of amatory tradition, as well as an unexpected consolidation of aspects of the psychological that these earlier texts (sometimes) carelessly registered. Most of its events are conventional to the cathartic and diverting fantasies of amatory and adventure fiction: hedonistic pleasures, disguises, shipwrecks, amorous exchanges, misplaced letters, and mistaken identities. Its style is artificial, nostalgic, and extravagant but also adherent to recent trends of intersecting narratives and more complex characterization.

Serial narrative structure was still the preferred form in the 1730's. This included works resembling Lydia Grainger's *Modern Amours: or, a Secret History of the Adventures of Some Persons of the First Rank* (1733), which offers successive but not necessarily sequential narratives that are easy for a reader to pick up and put down. More synthesized stories and complex characters were still innovative and experimental enough to be framed with a word of self-congratulation and caution. Thus episodes in Boyd's novel are labyrinthine (images of mazes, labyrinths, and winding nature are prevalent). Recognizing just the same that her discerning audience would also expect some unity of character and plot, the author writes, "I've done my best, to amuse the Just . . . with a Variety of Incidents; and some Plot" (Preface).

Despite the extremely fast pace and almost dizzying introductions of new characters and their situations, the story's framework is relatively straightforward and its individual narratives tightly interlinked. A Duke by the name of Horatio Bellfond lives on the "fertile Isle of Cyprus"(1), as his name suggests, as a much-desired lover and suitor and as a "Ruling Statesman" (1). We are told that he was once a ruined nobleman from a "Gallic Court"(2) who distinguished himself under Orleans, and his page, "young Florio" (9), is actually disguised Amanda, the sister of an absentee statesman, Bellfond's

friend Felix. Amanda, who "seem'd to be about Sixteen" (8), though we are told that she is actually nineteen, had fallen in love with and been living with Bellfond as his page Florio for a year and three months before the novel's immediate action. Patterned on *Twelfth Night's* Viola (or more immediately, the masquerading Amadea of Haywood's *The Fair Captive*), she is "very much esteem'd by the whole House, and let into almost all the Secrets of it" (8). The Duke is irresistibly drawn to her, lets her into his confidence, and allows her to enjoy his 'masculine' diversions.

The initial obstacles to their happiness are Bellfond's wife and brother. The Duchess is described as a compilation of literary stereotypes: spoiled court favourites, evil female conspirators, and over-amorous wives who "seem'd to hug the dear Indifference" (4) of their husbands. Complexly, however, her actions are "much more fantastick than ill-natur'd" (296), as Boyd offers a meta-literary suspension of character reality (from whose point of view, she asks?) The Duchess initially loves the page, all the while plotting to find out the identity of her husband's mysterious mistress, but in time she herself is duped by the contrivances of Amanda and dies, it is hinted, of a sexual disease.

The lovers' second hindrance is Bellfond's brother, Beauville. Boyd organizes her central male characters into three extremes of villain-seducer: the amorous but well-intentioned Duke, the mercenary and scheming Beauville, and the thoroughly vicious Carlos. Beauville is indicative of Boyd's ambivalence towards the reformed rake motif. More cunning than amorous, he plots to rape Belville's ward, Amira, as well as her waiting woman, Lucinda, but is sidetracked by the sexy suspicion that his brother's page is a mistress in disguise. Elaborate scheming, masquerading, and pursuits follow, as

Beauville sets out to violate the page and so force a public unveiling with the help of his brother's own jealousy.

While Bellfond steers Amanda clear of his machinating family, private conspiracies escalate into political intrigues, as a money-grubbing peasant mistakenly reads the romantic scheming as political plotting and reports the perpetrators to the Prince of Cyprus. After experiencing some confusion (and a little arousal), the young Prince, a prudent and deserving ruler, "at least in the Election of the Empire" (36), sends the meddling peasant to the galleys and reconciles with his favourite, Bellfond, whose wife fortunately dies and so frees him up to marry a very pregnant Amanda.

Parallelling and eventually converging with the main plot are the intrigues of Beauville with his mistress, Amelia, and Amanda's friend, Luvania, with the most ruthless of amatory villains, Carlos. In the first book we briefly encounter the story of Amira, Bellfond's ward and distant relation, placed with the Duke after her father's death. Though she is initially nearly raped by both Bellfond and Beauville (emblems of aristocratic vice), she is ultimately rescued romance style by La Motte (perhaps allusive to Mademoiselle La Motte of Haywood's *The Injur'd Husband*) who lurks at the Duke's estate as Florio's pretended kinsman. La Motte represents an even older literary type than that of the rake. He suggests a simplified narrative of what Jane Barker refers to in *Exilius* as outdated "Heroic Love." Although Boyd does not negate the inferred happiness of romantic or heroic love (Amira and La Motte escape and presumably remain happily married), her fantasy man is transparently a story. Although he fulfills his narrative duty, so "generous a Soul" (17) can have no sustained role in the exhausting world that Boyd goes on to depict. Thus his story must fulfill itself at the outset rather

than at the novel's climax. Courtly love is no match for the complexities of more modern issues like domestic abuse, seduction, and betrayal.

As instances of this, Amelia and Luvania are harried as they seek after freedom. Amelia works to convince her seducer to marry her, while Luvania seeks emotional freedom from a cycle of abuse. Luvania's life ends violently, as her illegitimate son relates to Amanda how the "distrest" was condemned by the Spanish King to "walk wrapt in a Sheet, branded with the vile Name of Apostate, with lighted Tapers, naked legg'd and footed, three tedious Miles, by the Priest's rigid Sentence, o'er snowy Mounts and Bars of burning Steel . . . . from thence was to be led to the left Convent's Alter, there to be stript and excommunicated," covered with the "Blood of the most Salvage-Wolves . . . hung with mournful Sables, with a sharp Axe to lose her Head" (326-7).[25] Boyd seems to be 'upping the ante' of violent romance deaths.

Like many of the prose fictions of the 1730's *The Female Page* often dramatizes, intentionally or unwittingly, tensions between realism and fantasy, truth and fiction, and didacticism and adventure. Michael McKeon's story of the novel sees a movement at this time from empirical 'truths' (history) towards a validation of literary 'truths' and probabilities, as they were later cemented by literary masters such as Richardson.[26] Analyses published since this seminal work, however, are commonly less inclined to assign valuations to particular fictional moments. Revisionary accounts of the novel

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[25] The recent Treaty of Vienna (1731) had saved Britain from a costly war, but Boyd's vision of an Inquisitional Spain was expedient for Hanoverian purposes--preserving the illusion of Jacobite menace and addressing England's mood of intolerance towards perceived threats to English dominions and mercantile interests. Pro-government authors would use the Popish threat and anti-French feeling to offset England's advantages. Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging a Nation 1707-1837* (New Haven, CT: Yale UP, 1992). See, especially, pages 11-71.

[26] Michael McKeon, *The Origins of the English Novel 1600-1740* (London: Radius, 1987).

seem receptive to a wider spectrum of rhetorical purposes and narrative controls and suggest that it is no longer useful to discuss genre in terms of progression or even to presume its beginnings or evolutions. This stance is especially helpful for understanding works that deny easy generic categorization, as *The Female Page* is an amatory fiction, political discourse, satire of emerging domestic fiction, and although this is not immediately apparent, a utopian fantasy.[27]

Structurally *The Female Page* may pale, even when compared with formulaic likenesses of Behn, Manley, and Haywood that also subversively pile up debased characters and corrupt social relationships, but manage to interweave distinct storylines more proficiently. For what it is worth, *The Female Page* does meets McKeon's aesthetic paradigm in its awareness of fictional techniques and its more sustained characters. Boyd's focus for her novel, though, was never strong and consistent characterization; she so obviously aimed at surges of instant gratifiers--rather like hasty journalistic accounts of London marriages and murders–excesses of overlapping narratives of violent desire and political plotting.[28] In her Preface Boyd goads her audience with the negative press that such sensational material had recently received–that some foul critics had dared to call "The Taste of the Town" into "Question"!

The ensuing section will examine the political plots in *The Female Page* as they intertwine with hedonistic amatory narratives. It will also look at the novel's use of the masquerade as it dramatizes extremes of service and subordination (of gender and rank).

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[28] As I will argue, it is utopian in that it aims to offer a 'benevolent' rulership loosely based on ideals of the Revolution Settlement.

It will argue that the amatory in *The Female Page* enables Boyd to paint a flattering portrait of 'Robinocracy' and to go about answering a central concern of the text--and indeed--of Boyd's writing career. How is it possible to simultaneously serve the state, fulfill one's own ambitions, gain preferment, and effect a good ministry, all the while pretending to a power which is, in essence, unlawful? In other words, how can a disenfranchised woman, vulnerable to claims of impropriety and posturing, gain from and influence the political moods and opinions of powerful men?

Masquerade in the 'Service' of Love

The Female Page would be written as a rare instance of a Whig novel, given the generally Tory slant of early women's fictions.[29] By the early 1730's Boyd had come to recognize that substantive power lay with the First Minister and his Whig enclave. They were, after all, perceived as less averse to female influence than were most ministerial critics, and a young Boyd had found powerful individuals within this ministry to back specific literary projects. Although Mary Davys offers an earlier example of a novelist with Whig sympathies, [30] government hirelings and volunteers in Walpole's England scribbled poetic panegyrics, newspapers, and plays--not novels. By contrast, Opposition

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[29] See Toni Bowers, "Seduction Narratives and Tory Experience in Augustan England," *The Eighteenth Century* 40.2 (1999) and Ros Ballaster, "A Gender of Opposition: Eliza Haywood's Scandal Fictions,"*Seductive Forms: Women's Amatory Fiction from 1684-1740* (Oxford: Clarendon P., 1998). Balaster suggests that Haywood "offers a critique of the structuring misogyny in the available discourses of . . . 'opposition' satire" (151).

[30] Mary Davys adapts seduction narratives to a Whig contractual model of subjecthood. Boyd does not credit Davys, but her idea for Amanda and the disguise devise may have been very loosely based on Davys's *The Reformed Coquette,* in which Amoranda is very nearly raped by a man disguised as her female friend. Boyd is arguably more closely connected to Whig centres of power than Davys, and the latter's Whig politics critique aristocratic libertinism, whereas Boyd's adjust erotic love to suit propagandist intentions.

prose fictions such as *Gulliver's Travels* were known to contemporary audiences, and some romance texts, such as Eliza Haywood's *Adventures of Eovaai*, satirized governmental corruption and Walpole's foreign and economic policies.[31]

Elizabeth Boyd may be an exception to the rule that government hacks did not write propagandist romance novels. She saw that a work of this nature could easily sell itself as manufactured for (light) entertainment for members of the most privileged classes. She writes that she is uninterested in the aesthetic judgements of "little splenetick Criticks," so long as she sees her "Subscriber's [sic] Smiles"(Preface, *FP*). These are overwhelmingly Whigs, as hers is a Court production. The author states simply, "I call my Book a Novel, not a History." This is not evidence of the book's "pre-novelistic" tenor (realism), though the "masquerading romance" did encompass realism. It is rather an argument for fiction as innately and excusably imaginative in the sense that it is fictionalized argument.

Probably it is fair to say that Walpole was quite indifferent to the genres of commissioned writings so long as they received wide distribution and minimized opposition damage at key policy-making moments. A work such as Boyd's, though, would not have been officially sanctioned by Walpole himself but submitted to prominent politicians who approved it or shaped its contents. Here a woman would have found herself on a level playing field with a man in that her works, though not actually

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[31]Jerry Beasley cites three dozen prose works concerning the Ministry in the 1730's that are primarily anonymous Opposition texts. "Portraits of a Monster: Robert Walpole and Early English Prose Fiction," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 14 (1981): 406-431. Haywood's *Memoirs of a Certain Island Adjacent to the Kingdom of Utopia* (1725) and *The Secret History of the Present Intrigues of the Court of Caramania* (1727) had provided scandalous digs at members of the circle around George, Prince of Wales, Princess Caroline, and Walpole. The most effectual of Haywood's satires of the Ministry, *Adventures of Eovvaai*, may have helped the Opposition coalition dethrone Walpole in 1741. Ros Ballaster, "A Gender of Opposition," *The Passionate Fictions of Eliza Haywood* 151.

commissioned, received the attention and, sometimes, the fiscal benefits of ministerially-advised texts. Of her three dedicatees, John, 2nd Duke of Agyll, William Anne Keppel, 2nd Earl Albermarle, and the Countess of Hertford, only the latter "subscrib'd to the Novel, to read it in Manuscript."[32] Boyd states, however, that others besides Hertford, who was devoted to the Royal family, especially Caroline, read her work. How much independence Boyd had to surrender to Hertford or others is uncertain, but as it stands the work was written with courtiers in mind. Anonymous from "King's College, Cambridge," increasingly a Whig holding after royal creation of honorary doctors (J.C.D Clark, 156) writes,

> By [Boyd] in Courts, Sincerity shall reign
> And Faith unspotted at St. James shine.
> Corruption banish'd, Honesty restor'd,
> Statesmen shall wonder how they kept their Word

Beyond the charitable appeal of the project, subscribers also had voyeuristic reasons for wishing to read the work. Boyd, her patrons, or possibly even her publisher, seem to have counted on the historical nostalgic draw of the novel's promised themes. In her 'Preface' Boyd entices with Delariviere Manley's brand of political and erotic disclosure, which both authors claim is customarily revealed in a "Key at the End" of the novel. Boyd would have her audience believe that the "Curious" who read it in prior to publication were excited by its defamatory potential, but that she is "not oblig'd to acquaint the Publick whether the Story's real or ficticious." At once denying and

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[32] Boyd asks Albemarle, the "spendthrift earl" (*DNB* vol 6, 37-42), to read her work, whereas she asks the Duke of Argyle's "Protection" after its publication.

professing to be a *roman à clef,* the story is an aristocratic romance which promises to conceal and reveal the delectable secrets of the rich and powerful.[33] Graves suggested that Boyd equivocates over the key because she had nothing to tell. Boyd writes, however, that while other novels "Lampoon" (i.e satirize individuals in the Ministry), she is respectful of the personal privacy of her subscribers: her party alignment necessitated portraits of political types rather than specific individuals.

As the previous section notes, *The Female Page* belongs to the popular sub-genre termed the 'disguising romance,' which had enabled novelists throughout the 1720's to explore ideologies of gender roles. Each of the major novelists, Defoe, Haywood, Davys, and Barker, made characters go disguised into society to seek love, revenge, intrigue, or simply participation and inclusion. Power is usually ambiguous in these texts, as it is in *The Female Page*, for the disguised woman is as often pursued and tormented for her undefinable attractions as she is empowered by her artifice. But more positively she manages to release aggressive behaviours, turns tables on seducers, and to be assertive in her actions and desires. In the end traditional gendered order is usually reasserted, but for a time the masquerader subverts expectations, frees suppressed feelings, and forces others to unmask. Mary Anne Schofield argues that Boyd's novel is a perfect example of the 'disguising romance' which adopts the masquerade technique to explore "exploitation and frustration" and "feminine aggression."[34]

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[33] Now proved historical veracity of the characters in *New Atlantis* makes it easy to forget that Manley herself was deliberately ambivalent about whether her creation was "A True History" or a "History" of "Fancy."

[34]Mary Anne Schofield, "Elizabeth Boyd," *Masking and Unmasking the Female Mind: Disguising Romances in Feminine Fiction 1713-1799* (Newark: U of Delaware P., 1990) 24. This is the only serious published study of the work, although it stays within the limited range of the early-century masquerade themes.

A sub-genre of this disguising romance is the disguised slave narrative in which a person of high rank elects to humble him or herself by dressing as a member of a lower order and sometimes by going into a beloved's service.[35] This versatile plot has a long history and can signify love's enslavement but also female agency, cunning, and sexual ambiguity.[36] More often than not heterosexual love and its constraints predominate after an unmasking, but only after a woman acts as sexual aggressor or as intermediary between 'her' master and another woman, and throws accepted patterns and roles of courtship into flux.

Significantly the power that the character Amanda gains by debasing herself in the disguise as Duke Bellfond's page is not only sexual but also quite literally political. Amanda/ Florio is not afforded absolute protection, since she becomes the object of the Duchess's and Lucasia's aggressive desires, but she given a tremendous hand in the administrative control within the Duke's household and over his political affairs–whereas in the traditional plot the 'servant' has a hand in arranging the 'master's' love affairs. Once Amanda opts for disguise as a page, as "my Lord's Man-Mistress" (51), her desire for Bellfond is idealized as perfect political loyalty and service and thereafter is contrasted with the vainglory and self-service of others. If the novel were said to have a

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[35] Perhaps the most famous of these narratives was Haywood's *Philidore and Placentia; or L'amour trop Delicat* (1727) in which Philidore disguises himself as a gypsy servant to perform debasing household tasks in order to be near Placentia. In *Love in Excess*, also by Haywood, a girl in love with Count d'Elmont follows him disguised as his page, Fidelio, and dies in his service of a broken heart.

[36] Haywood's Philadore is made ridiculous by his social slumming and love mania, but earlier uses of servant disguise motif suggest the disguises are donned after a rational choice. For example, Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* plot can be traced to two early sixteenth-century sources. In Barnabe Riche's "Apolonius and Silla" the daughter of the Duke of Cyprus disguises herself as her brother to enter Apolonius's service. And in the Italian work *G'Ingannati* Lelia escapes from a convent and disguises herself as a boy, Fabio, to serve her passion (Flaminio). These plots suggest the performative nature of gender and power and stress the cunning of the disguised servants.

primary motif, it would be the nature of good service.

Boyd uses well-known plots of the 'love's service' to reflect her readers' interests in the administrative questions of Walpole's system: What constitutes proper influence? How does one gain preferments? Why do 'malcontents' level allegations against 'innocents'–i.e. the Ministry? She would have a lot to contend with, as Walpole's administrative system was increasingly viewed as oppressive and corrupt. J. H Plumb describes how opposition began to mount in 1731-2, as the Minister was "in no ways squeamish about the liberties of the individual," and "[i]f the necessity arose, he was quite prepared to use harsh measures, savage punishment, and the full authority of the Crown to make the public conform to his system" (*Sir Robert Walpole*, 238). An awareness of institutional greed and fraudulence was compounded by waves of smallpox and other illnesses in London. Multiplying satirical portraits of Walpole and his tactics of bribery and theatrical and poetic attacks on the morality of the upper classes opened up a market for libel and satire of the government--a market that Boyd had previously catered to with her publication of *Variety*.

Whereas Eliza Haywood's critiques of government in her stories point to the exclusion of women from political positions, Boyd's disguising narrative dramatizes a reversal and then a magnification of sexual and social 'norms' which allows aggressive public participation: "where all the Counter Turns of State and Business, make but so many curious Webs for Love" (2). Amatory fiction is a suitable form to legitimate a female politician. In the guise of reformative and didactic instruction, it furthers the advisory role of the female artist/ political advisor, as Boyd had once envisioned herself "singing" to royalty. Yet, intriguingly unlike Aubin, Barker, or even Haywood, Boyd is

uninterested in the reformation of behaviours or morals of weak young women, or the egos of powerful politicians, so long as she strives to engage with the people and ideas which make up a system of rule.

Themes of patronage and service in the novel reflect Walpole's fight to govern by party attachment, by patronage, and by grinding down opposition and defectors from within his own camp–Townshend, Pulteney, Wyndham, and Shippen. The preservation of loyalty within Duke Bellfond's household mirrors similar occurrences of 'good' government equated to party line within Walpole's own House. In *The Female Page* the mutual devotion and working relationship of the Duke and his page "Florio" are reminiscent of that of Caroline and Walpole and the King.[37] Consistent with the masquerade's ability to destabilize gender, Florio is reminiscent of both Walpole and the Queen. At the same time, Duke Bellfond is a "First Minister" who was forced to withdraw to Cyprus because he "grew like all Closet Favourites, too great to be unsuspected." As an "allow'd Favourite with the new King, who made himself esteem'd" (121), he is suspected for his very goodness and for his deservedly preferred status. The narrator observes (probably to the amusement of her first readers) that he had on "many Occasions made himself fear'd abroad, and lov'd at home . . . . not that he really lov'd the Place [Cyprus with a pun on government appointment and also England rather than Hanover], for the Statesman seldom consults inclination" (3). His only fault, "if it be one," is "Ambition, the most commendable Vice" (22).

Whereas Haywood's Opposition novels attack Walpole by portraying him as a

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[37] As Paul Langford puts its, "For all his skill as a parliamentarian, Walpole's supreme talent lay in managing the royal closet. His constant coaxing of George II had been carried out in close collaboration with Queen Caroline" (38) *A Polite and Commercial People in England 1727-1783* (Oxford: OUP, 1992).

private man with a voracious appetite for sex and power, the 'innocent' Amanda in Boyd's novel pursues the Great Man. Amanda or Florio, although "Melancholly" love-sick, is a heroine who is capable of being preferred as "Page to the Closet" by the highest rulers in Cyprus, the Duke and later the Prince of Cyprus. His appeal to the Duke is companionate but also erotic: "Young Florio, was the Darling of the Duke in so extraordinary a Manner, he would often permit him to ride with him in his Chariot; make him the Confidant of his Amours, and Partner of his Diversions" (9). However his expertise rises less from innate 'feminine' moral virtue (Amanda is not overly pious and principled) than it does from trained political intelligence and especially loyalty. The Duke "would impart to him Affairs of Secrecy and Moment; and almost on all Accounts descend to ask his Opinion, at once making Trial of his Depth and Fidelity"(9). Cross-dressed Florio has the credibility of a man with the perceived "engaging Sweetness" and abilities of a woman. She is well suited to civil service because she is inspired by love (for her lover, her prince, and her state) and by the traditional presumed feminine attribute of reasonable compliance or "continu'd Obligingness" (20).

The memory of Mary Astell's feminist polemics thrives in *The Female Page's* claim that women are naturally suited to the "more noble Improvement of the Faculties," such as "reading, Painting, Music, Poetry" (9), which Boyd further allows to be qualities of a good politician.[38] The Duke, "finding Nature had done her Part, took special Care, [Florio's] Education should not be wanting"(9). Florio is a rhetorician and something of an artist, amusing, as the author does "with so many well invented Tales and witty

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[38] Nor is Amanda the only female who is adept with the pen. Luvania, (pre Pamela) imprisoned by her husband's family is strictly "barr'd writing; Pen, Ink and Paper" (151), though "Limning" (painting in watercolour) is allowed.

Amusements" (20): the feminine-companionate duties of a woman are not unlike the consultative duties of courtier. This servant-woman parallel is underscored when she is marked by the Prince of Cyprus, first as a valuable servant and secondly as the mistress to the Duke. Not suited to vigorous activity, Florio nonetheless impresses with "Depth and Fidelity" (9-10) which take the form of linguistic competence. After her formal training, she is trusted with the political and, more traditionally, the romantic assignations of the household and the government because of an "Excess of goodness, that ever took a Pride in Power to please" (31). Although most of her charms belong to her "Person" and loyalty, she is also consulted by the Bellfond when unnamed plots are afoot. She is valued for her selective silence and for her intelligence skills. "Peruse those Papers that lie on my Desk in the green Closet," he requests, "peruse them carefully, added he, giving a Key, for I shall try your Judgement, and the Accompts relate to the Prince" (36). Responding to Opposition complaints of preferment and avarice, Boyd argues instead that the strength of a polity resides in well-placed favours, and that loyalty must be self-fulfilling though not bribed or inspired by greed. Amanda's surfeit of desire for Bellfond enables him to utilize her talents. [39]

As is to be expected in disguising romances, once Amanda is discovered to be Amanda and she is marked as a desirable female by the Prince of Cyprus, she is

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[39] Of the many characters in *The Female Page*, only Amira mistrusts Florio's altruistic intentions to organize the practical details of her intrigue with the character La Motte. Flanked on all sides by machinating suitors, she is incapable of either seeing through or accepting Florio's disguise because she can neither read authority as feminine nor service (kindliness and duty) as masculine. In a radical reversal of satirical mistrust of the scheming, politic woman, a stereotype that Boyd would exploit in later lampoons of the Duchess of Marlborough, she argues that only a woman can be trusted for her steadfastness. She also inverts the literary heroic and classical ideals and patriot heroic political ideals, both employed against the Ministry in the 1720's and 30's, by suggesting that male heroism, self-sacrifice, and classical virtues are improbable enough as to be completely unrecognizable and disbelieved.

forbidden actual involvement in the Duke's political service, and the invitation to join the Prince's retinue is revoked. As a woman, her service is owed to the Duke as a man, not to the Prince as a sovereign. She resolves, "No Prince I'm certain, loves me like Duke Bellfond, nor could I serve 'em with that Satisfaction" (58). The Duke claims it is unbearable to see her in clothes of servitude: as Bellfond puts it, the "Law of the Sexes must be different" (21). Amanda's protection of the Duke's household interests are sexual and privatized, now that she is "lov'd more than ever" (79). Yet for a brief time, her disguise allows symbolic entrance into the realm of patriotic duty, albeit through the mechanisms of personal romance.

Contrasting with the reliable servant Amanda is the cunning but ignorant Francisco, a "Shipwreck'd Mariner" and merchant who rose by his "Diligence and facetious Humour" (1-2) to be gardener in Bellfond's household. The clash between aristocratic principles and bourgeois commercialism had become traditional to romance genres, as authors saw an aristocratic sense of honour aligned with the novel's ethical perspectives. Thus Francisco is the traditional mercenary romance villain but also a figure for the urban merchants who "Walpole "disliked . . . as a class. They opposed him in the House and in the City" (J.H. Plumb, 241). Though deeply imbedded in the system, his private plans are subversive to court and national interests. In this Boyd follows the lead of ministerial propagandists by portraying the urban merchant as ignobly hankering after personal profit and creating discord. Franscisco cannot escape Bellfond's sharp eye for long, as his disloyalty is exposed by a faithful though lesser servant, and he is given

"to the Lash and Galleys, a fit Reward for Insolence unlicens'd" (78).[40]

In its entirety, the combined intrigue and erotica of *The Female Page,* Boyd states, offers "a Word on the large Theme"(71) of service, which had continued to nag Walpole's elaborate systems of patronage. It is highly probable that these themes could have been read as 'pressing the party line' among Boyd's titled readers, for all that their interests were very diverse. But in the end, cross-dressing Amanda's unconditional loyalty to a wise and deserving statesman simplifies the bewildering allegiances and political intrigues that surround the fictional lovers (and the real-life politicians?).

Although Boyd probably did not see a literal administrative appointment for women in the page's traditional duties and benefits, her story does argue that good rulers do not discount the loyalties of even the lowest servants, messengers, chamber-maids, "Hinds" (70)–and, perhaps, female writers. In the voice of the latter she offers a rare authorial interjection and patriotic monologue:

> [T]here are honest Clowns and Slaves sincere, Prize worth a Legion of false fawning Lords, who bred in courts lodge Fraud in every Meaning . . . . Forgive a Woman this . . . For where the Great are Friends, they're greatly such . . . but these are Men unprejudic'd by Crowns, unbought by Favour, who know to serve a Monarch when of Use, without ambitious Views or private Whispers, unbiass'd, faithful, void of Interests" (70-71).

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[40] Franscisco's misogyny is striking. He is incapable of recognizing true merit, reflecting, perhaps, Boyd's perception of opposition slighting of female political efforts. Franscisco misreads Florio's abilities and attractions, seeing her as physically weak and therefore valueless. Jealous of the Duke's preference, he mocks Florio's physical frailties (a common target in satire on Lord Hervey and Walpole). He only defers to rank when something is to be gained, displaying what would have been read as disgraceful presumption towards the Duchess who he believed should be "whipt at Mast-Head" (42) for her preference for Florio.

At the "voluntary Abdication" of his Prince," Amanda's father lost his place and estate because he had "taken Arms opposite to the new King" (116). Time enough had passed for daughters of the discontented to contribute to peaceful rule of Hanoverian government, even if their power was yet disguised or lampooned as mere outward semblance of male power.

Political Plotting and the Romance of the Whig Bureaucracy

Walpole was by 1731 at pains to present himself as the guardian of balanced government, and Boyd found herself having to confront current representations of his arbitrary rule.[41] Further her political premise in the novel is conservative: supportive, even nostalgic about aristocracy, as it suggests threat to monarchical government resides in the disintegration of patriarchalism, a view shared by most mainstream Whigs. A. R. Humphreys writes that after 1688, "The Whig theory of 'contract' between people and ruler triumphed over the Tory theory of Divine Right; Parliament became the unquestioned supreme power; judges were emancipated from the King's will" (*The Augustan World*, 99). Boyd must reconcile these beliefs by signposting scenarios of potential (and actual) historical troubles which she brings to modern resolutions by good government and the Lockeian thinking of the work's slightly flawed though basically principled central characters.

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[41] Government excise men, for example, were reviled by the press in the early 1730's, which "never tired of lurid accounts, some true, some invented, all heightened in effect, of the brutalities of the excise officers" who were hired to perform espionage deeds and to generally terrorize "honest shopkeepers" (J. H. Plumb, 238). One Ministerial rejoinder is summed up by Sundt Urstad. Whigs developed the attitude that "limitations in man's nature meant that imperfections in the political system had to be expected and accepted" (112). Sometimes it was just best to equivocate when faced with an opposition press that portrayed "a nation in which corruption is sapping the foundations of public and private morality" (130).

The political plot of the novel revolves around the Prince's confrontation with the rumoured potential that the Duke is plotting to overthrow him; and the Duke, in turn, must confront rumoured and actual disloyalties from within his own household, family members and servants. The polemical parallel, of course, was the stability of the Hanoverian monarchy and Walpole's continuing effort to maintain this stability and his power through party attachments.

Like most Whigs, Boyd must deny indefeasible rights of rank. Thus to reconcile an acceptance of absolute Ministerial authority and a rejection of passive obedience, her royal characters must never be allowed to make political mistakes. The Prince is revered because of his "native Goodness" and his "happ[iness] in faithful and prudent Councellors"–not solely for his hereditary right (though "he wisely retain'd his grandsires well made Laws" [276]). Boyd's political world offers the ideal (Whig) contractual situation in that obedience to a sovereign is already well placed. Affection for authority and mutual contract between subject and monarch is right in *The Female Page* because it is reciprocal, fairly summed up in one of the novel's heading which quotes from *The Fair Circassian,* "Yet still you'll feel his Fetters on your Mind: Whate'er you stake, his Value's far above, And nothing balances but Love for Love."

Monarchical tyranny is only inevitable when one contractual party is blindly devoted or 'passively obedient.' This becomes especially poignant in the novel's subplot (encompassing much of the second and third books) about the beautiful "Luvania." Boyd joins other writers in the 1720's and 30's in making despotism and resistance in extreme circumstances painfully psychological and familial, rather than historical and hypothetical. Heroines' sad fates but also their extremes of devotion force political

theories to be applied to the lives of women. It is not Luvania's sexual naivety or her unlucky stars that destroy her but her misplaced affection. In a disturbingly modern and psychologically acute portrayal of abuse syndrome, we read her descent into paranoia and self-doubt as she feeds her drastically warped addiction to her lover. He abandons her pregnant, publicly maligns her, fires her convent, and rapes and beats her. True to her name, which suggests "spirit of love," she is inexplicably obedient to a terrible desire. "A thousand Terrors made the Villain hated, whilst yet a thousand Softs pleaded within: So true it is, where once we love, 'tis difficult to hate, even though we form the most rigid Resolution, and have a real Cause to be offended." She offers a chilling reminder of obedience to arbitrary authority that can only end up on the scaffold, which is where we find her in the final moments of the novel.

Eventually condemned to death by the Spanish king for Carlos's treasons, Luvania literalizes the conventional image of a lover being pierced through the heart, as she runs Carlos through in a grim re-enactment of regicide and rebellion.[42] This does not happen before her epiphany that her loyalty belongs to Amanda, whom she had initially betrayed to rapacious Carlos.[43] A letter, received *post mortem*, reads, "I lov'd thee [Amanda], as just Kings a loyal Subject, and placed thee next my Heart with Lovers Fondness" (233). Luvania shoulders the allegorical failure of weak subject and weak ruler and the failure, in Boyd's mind, of a woman who has the potential for loyal

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[42] This was also conventional justice for personal treachery and exploitations as well: a scenario which Boyd had likely read in Manley's "The Wife's Resentment" in *The Power of Love: In Seven Novels* (1720). A dagger through the heart is last recourse for the abused, abandoned, and victimized. Luvania is a precursor of sorts to the scintillating but improper confidants of Burney and Austen heroines: a "dangerous dear-lov'd Friend . . . cunning as the subtlest She, discerning as distrust, and wise as man; well read, far travell'd, and of deep Remark" (140-1).

[43] It is traditional in female revenge narratives for a murder to be committed to help other women.

decisions, "unbias'd, faithful, void of Interests" (71).

Writing in support of the government was not, however, so easily resolved with the invention of a charming and politic Prince and his loyal subjects and the synchronous fantasy despotic governance. Jerry Beasley writes that the "perceived discrepancy between proclaimed political philosophy and the actual practice of governing was a recurrent theme in scores of satirical treatises against politicians . . . Meanwhile, it became a matter of insistent repetition among writers of popular narrative, who . . . reflected their consciousness of it in story after story of virtuous men and women struggling alone in a society whose hostility to them belies public ideals of morality."[44] Boyd alleges that her text will portray heroic examples of behaviour. However, if *The Female Pages's* themes of perfect loyalty were intended to encourage loyalty within the Ministry, its theme of human and political imperfection is directed towards the promotion of a Whig acceptance that good rule is not always perfect rule. (Unusually enough, the conventions of passionate extremes of romance writing lend themselves nicely to this project, as female virtue is not always chaste in the novel.)[45]

Boyd also responds to stories of government's privilege by differentiating between fantastical and 'real' threats to the state. On the one hand the novel works hard to align the opposition press with chimerical and irrational accusation: espionage letters,

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[44] "Politics and Moral Idealism: The Achievement of Some Early Women Novelists," *Fetter'd or Free: British Women Novelists 1670-1815* 216-236.

[45]The word 'prudence' comes to mean a wise political mindset of caution, even suspicion, rather than its usual amatory connotations of sexual purity. Blushes are not markers of modesty but of desire and mutual political knowledge: signs of potential leakage of secrets and of political exposure. Idealized notions of submission, subordination, deserving, ambition, and preferment that were circulating in the opposition media are replaced with imperfect (at least to modern sensibilities) political and romantic decisions. 'Guilt' is often arbitrarily or (mis)placed. The author indulges her flawed characters and seems to argue for tolerance in the manner of Mandevillean persuasion that private vices generally work in the favour of some greater good.

presumed plots, and suspected treasons are ultimately exposed as bubbles and thereby symbolically buried in former days of Jacobite plotting or even in unstable pre-Revolution times. Ignorance and faction (opposition) create false and hysterical suspicion. "Enemies" read a "Letter dark and mystical, and pretend there are strong Symptoms of a conceal'd Plot, in every Sentence" (272). Bellfond himself is suspected of political plotting when he steals away to meet his mistress but is soon cleared by the level-headed Prince. On the other hand, indisputable betrayals of trust invite the readers's indignation and then glee at ensuing punishments. The "Pleadings" of the peasant who misrepresents Bellfond to the Prince "were in vain, there was no Pity due to such base Miscreants . . . and giving a strict Charge for the Peasant to be carry'd directly aboard the Galley, and there kept during his Life to hard Labour, [the Prince] dismiss'd him with a Frown" (283).[46] The wheels of administrative authority roll over disputants to Lockean rights of property (material wealth and safety of the governing class).

As a routine Ministerial response to the Opposition, Boyd argues that rancorous accusations of degeneracy levelled at powerful individuals are the last resort of the jealous and the politically impotent. This was something of an uphill battle, as the 1730's was the decade for innuendos and jests at the expense of politicians and peers, Walpole in particular. Bellfond's desperate desire to protect his mistress's reputation is reminiscent of George II's affair with Henrietta Howard, revisited in scandal chronicles.[47]

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[46]Boyd seems to take pleasure from the just punishment of the peasant as a purging of a Titus Oates-like informant. Her plots smack of the seemingly routine reports of expatriate plotting, impeachments for treason, flights abroad that were reported in the first two decades of the century.

[47] Howard figures prominently in Haywood's *The Secret History of the Present Intrigues of the Court of Carmania* (1727) as Ismonda, mistress of Prince Theodore (George II). The *GM* advertises in June 1731 that the King had appointed Howard Groom of the Stole, a position traditionally associated with men, although Queen Anne had appointed Sarah Churchill Mistress of the Wardrobe and Groom of the Stole. This ambivalence of Howard's position, at least in title, corresponds nicely with Boyd's female page.

The traditional rumours and impending dangers that the romance heroine traditionally encounter as a reminder of the fragility of female reputation also are a reminder of Opposition campaigns to destroy political reputations. Defamation ranges in Boyd's text from rumour to calculated destruction of public character in the form of the relentless "Round of circling News" and "Court Lampoon" (137). Amanda blanches "pale and death-like . . .on reading the Gazette"(14), which misrepresents her lover's affections as belonging to another woman.

The reader finds, however, that sympathies come down (atypically) on the side of the satiric target, as intelligence is usually incomplete and cruel.[48] Rumour is always malicious and hypocritical. "Carlo had resolv'd when he'd Triumph'd in his Wish" to seduce and afterwards torment many women, that he would "blast the Reputation of the Ladies, he had Injured" (227). Gossip is also predominately envious, as "Virtue often gets the Lash of Vice"(137). Words shared in private, "deliver'd with a Private whisper" (137), are never innocuous but have bearing on public policies.

Overall, romance formula fiction proves adaptable, as Boyd adapts the savvy means of Behn, Manley, and Haywood for prevailing political ends. Civic strength, she reasoned, could be creditably presented as diffused throughout a system by skilful influence and the fine-tuned machinery of personal relationships--in other words, she successfully creates a veritable romance of Whig bureaucracy. This system could then be easily be applied to the symbolically parallel activities of sexual and political intriguing.

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[48] The novel seems to recognize a contradiction in "an age so professedly confident about the power of rational inquiry and the reliability of informed judgement," that "there was a parallel sense of uncertainty about the human capacity to know anything well, much less to render truth accurately." Jerry C. Beasley, "Little by Little; or, the History of the Early Novel, Now," *Studies in the Novel* 30,2 (1998): 287-300.

A "Word or two in Defence of my Novel"

In this segment I leave Boyd's patronage and political goals and consider *The Female Page's* place within the contentious category called the "novel." In this I observe Ros Ballaster's claim that, yes, it is important to consider "alternative models and means of winning female power" out of masculine modes of cultural authority. "Yet generic conventions are at least as important as ideological concepts in the making of women's fiction and the shaping of representations of femininity in this transitional period" (22-3).

Although narrative was never stable at any given moment in the eighteenth century, the period in which Boyd wrote her novel was especially transitional. The novel itself was veering towards domestic fiction, as the 'companionate' and 'sentimental,' perceived as separate from wider spheres of public influence, became the new literary currency. Throughout the 1720's many of Boyd's sisters in writing were at odds with their female literary inheritance and were at pains to present themselves as more respectable than their predecessors.[49] In 1737, the year Boyd's novel was reprinted, the *Gentleman's Magazine* printed Elizabeth Carter's poem "On the Death of Mrs. Rowe," which would sermonize, "Long did romance o'er female wits prevail, / Th' intriguing novel and the wanton tale. / What different subjects in thy pages shine! / How chaste the style, how generous the design!"[50]

As Boyd's combative Preface (a "Word or two in Defence of my Novel")

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[49] Mary Davys presented herself as a loyal subject, and "though a woman," as virtuous and sensible. Martha Bowden, "Mary Davy: Self-Preservation and the Woman Writer's Reputation in the Early Eighteenth Century," *Women's Writing* 3.1 (1996): 17-33. Penelope Aubin prefaced *A Collection of Entertaining Histories and Novels* (1739) with the now familiar-sounding refrain, "Designed to Promote the Cause of Virtue and Honour."

[50] By 1732 Boyd had an additional task: defending against attacks of superficiality, because audiences were becoming increasingly receptive to methods of reading and were responding to more comprehensive theories of genre.

suggests, the novel was potentially saleable in 1732 but morally and aesthetically it was still a very unsettled and experimental form. Boyd could not have known its explosive future because she was writing in the midst of its changing status (deteriorating for amatory traditions) in the 1720's. As an opportunistic writer, she was drawn to it as a forum for political contention and, perhaps, generic exploration. As a reader of romances she was well aware in its history and its endless adaptations.[51]

The following section will suggest that it was increasingly possible for authors, including Boyd, to choose whether to hide or make visible the seams of their creations to help along their audience's recognition of plot and meaning and to instil understanding of the political agency inherent in female narrative voice and romance techniques. As she did this, Boyd felt herself at war with emerging "pious polemic"and the declining status of her favourite authors.[52]

"A New Elisa Writes": Female Influence in *The Female Page*

In each of her important early texts, *Variety* (1727), *The Female Page* (1732), and her collection of poetry, *The Humourous Miscellany* (1733), Boyd participates in elucidating political dimensions of genre and literary tradition. *The Female Page* demonstrates an awareness of precise moments of cultural transformation--testimony to the sly exchange

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[51] Boyd seems familiar with Congreve's renowned claim in the "Preface" of *Incognita* (1692) which had declared that a "novel" should promise moments of verisimilitude and probability. Her formative reading also included works by Delarivier Manley, who had defined an'antiromance' impulse in her "Introduction" to *The Secret History of Queen Zarah*: it (over) pronounced romance "unrealities"and pursued intersections of extreme fiction and "truth," often from within the heightened artificiality of romance language and themes themselves. In the 1720's Boyd had also read Haywood and possibly Mary Davys's ironic brands of ambivalent amatory 'truths,' as they tinkered with perceived conflicts between fiction and reality, narrative authority, and reader understanding.

[52] This now-familiar phrase was first used in John Richetti's *Popular Fictions Before Richardson: Narrative Patterns 1700-39* (Oxford: Clarendon UP, 1969).

among women who used their artistic wits to write and rewrite public tastes and opinions. As she had in *Variety*, Boyd takes every opportunity throughout her novel to advance popular authors and the concept of reading for pleasure. She builds new meaning for her pen name, "Louisa." While as an unknown Boyd apparently felt incapable of building on her own reputation, based as it was on politically inflammatory or possibly passé styles (*Variety*), she could build on the notoriety of others. "Louisa," or alternatively "Lovisa," may suggest familiarity with characters of these names in Haywood's *Love in Excess* (1719), used again by Haywood in 1744 in *The Fortunate Foundlings*.[53] As a pilot project, *The Female Page* offered opportunity to restyle "Louisa" as somewhat less cheeky and urbane but more consequential as an artist who stokes the "amorous Fire" of erotic fiction. The author of the novel is a novice like Louisa of *Variety,* but now also a young woman touched by "Apollo"-- rather than satire's bug. As such, the self-proclaimed romance writer is presumed worthy of being read (and funded) by the great.

Although the novel was by no means an obvious choice for subscription publication at this time (novels accounted for merely 1.1 percent of publications), it would have been difficult for authors not to observe the quick return and popular success of writers such as Haywood and Penelope Aubin. Boyd seeks an ally in the former but has no use for the didacticism or moral slant of the writers of 'pious polemic.' The view that Penelope Aubin and Jane Barker repressed an older form of feminism in favour of conservative moralism is perhaps too simplistic, as 'pious' novels adapt the same amatory themes although for more didactic purposes. It was certainly a known tactic of

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[53] In *Love in Excess* Alovisa writes a series of *billet-doux* but is a treacherous character who betrays her female rivals and dies after a brief marriage to the hero. The use of romance names, their assigned intelligences and shortcomings, their associative meanings, and their shared characters is yet to be explored. *The Female Page* seems mindful of such connections.

these romance writers and some poets to portray the 'Triumvirate' of Manley, Behn, and Haywood as somehow tainted by eroticism in favour of their own reformative goals.

Unlike some of her contemporaries who went to great lengths to divorce themselves from the memory of appetitive aristocratic ideology, Boyd offers beautifully-pronounced statements of literary inheritance. She sensed that female novelists had the greatest vested interest in gaining acceptance for art that amuses: writing that is light, amoral, political, erotic, ironic, and commercially-inspired. This was where a woman eked out a living, spawned vicarious female experience, and had some say in wide-based cultural discussions.

It is apparently rare to read early and assured statements of female influence--let alone statements that preferred the theatrical and prose-fiction world to the various countercultures of 'moralizing' romance, religious poetry, and private meditation. Ros Ballaster admits similarities in the language and themes of women's romance narratives at this time, but she is less inclined see these choices as deliberatively interactive. "It is . . . difficult to speak of a 'women's tradition' in the novel" in the early eighteenth century. If women even read each others' novels, "they did not, for the most part, openly acknowledge influence." Yet Boyd bases her novel on simple imitation and adaptation of works by Haywood and others, and she is mindful of these writers' roles in current duelling aesthetic discourses.

As Boyd had championed the tragi-comedies of Behn and Centlivre and the romance scandals of Manley in her poem *Variety*, so she would praise these genres and authors of satire and sexual chase in *The Female Page*. An encomium about Boyd, prefixed to *The Female Page,* claims that it is to Haywood's success but also to her

presumed setting sun that Boyd owes her own projected rise. A complimentary poem to the author reads,"Yield Heywood yield . . . A new Elisa writes."[54] This immediate positioning of writing self in relation to Haywood suggests an acknowledgement of cultural crosscurrents and specific workings of gender in this genre of choice. It promotes the popular and emotive style as penned by women and claims an adaptation of popular themes so as to work effectively from within the mainstream and status quo.

Though admiring, this passage could also be taken as a reminder that prominence and popularity was not solely or even primarily based on artistic priority or even sex, but often on transitory interests and political alignments; or even, as in Haywood's case, on individual theatrical performances or published works. Apart from straightforward professed admiration for the writer, this compliment is somewhat back-handed, given that the "old Elisa" was becoming progressively anti-Ministry at this time, both in her capacity as an actress and as a writer.[55] As suggested earlier, however, Boyd argues that the successful amatory genre, adapted from Haywood, can acclimatize to any project dictated by the Whig oligarchy.

If Boyd's claim in her 'Preface' that her work is a 'novel' rather than 'history' (*chronique scandaleuse*) is any kind of a concession to the popular assumption that romance is a female form and therefore inferior, this is Boyd's only allowance for the biases of moralists and literary critics. The professedly erotic text, she claims, can speak

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[54] 'Elisa' may also refer to Dido. Dryden's "To her Grace, the Duchess of Ormond" reads, "Such for Ascanius, fair Elisa wrought",(749-52). *The Poetical Works of Dryden*, ed. George R. Noyes (Cambridge Mass: The riverside P, 1950). Both the dead heroine and the living author point to the production of illicit texts.

[55] As Boyd composed her novel, Haywood was already harnessed to the "hydra-headed opposition to Walpole's Ministry." (146) Ros Ballaster, "A Gender of Opposition: Eliza Haywood's Scandal Fiction," *The Passionate Fiction of Eliza Haywood: Essays on Her Life and Works,* ed. Kristen M. Saxton and Rebecca P. Bocchicchio (Lexington: U of Kentucky P, 2000).

to many audiences simultaneously: the "Just and Generous Of both Sexes."[56] "The statesman shall his darling Schemes forsake," as he forgets himself in the novel, and the "Young," the "Country Squires," the "Whigs, Tories, Cits, and Courtiers" will all lose themselves in the extravagance of the "gilt Romance." This statement is a find: precise audiences for early romances are still uncertain, and the preservation of a categorical audience--titled, political, and composed of both men and women--is something of an artifact.

Other writers are also conscripted to Boyd's cause to promote popular and erotic fiction: Restoration dramatists whose status was sinking fast, including Nicholas Rowe, later criticized by Dr. Johnson for his staging of too-amiable rakes; and John Banks, who drew on French romances, although Boyd quotes him in the context of his English history plays. Boyd also offers a sidelong glance at that "celebrated Lady . . . Mrs. Bhenn" (84). Most intriguing, perhaps, is Boyd's allusion on her title page to a section from Anne Finch's "Life's Progress," as it was probably popularized in Manley's *New Atlantis*. The women offer easy generic and thematic alignments:

> How gaily is at first begun,
> Our Live's uncertain Race.
> How soft the first Ideas move,
> That wander o'er the Mind.
> How full the Joy, how fair the Love,
> Which does that early Season move.

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[56] Cheryl Turner hints that declining popularity of amatory romance was influenced by the expansion and segregation of female reading audiences from male, inasmuch as readers of amatory fictions included both sexes (45).

MANLEY'S Atlantis.[57]

This text is thematically appropriate, as Boyd promises to chronicle tumultuous and brief lives of young romance types. But the more discerning reader (in the formula fiction 'loop') may have picked up on promised scandalous content (Manley), or even more subtly on the context of writing to please, pleasing to eat. This is, after all, where Finch had entered Manley's line of vision. She had written of Finch's poem that sensibility and polish ("pretty things") are the prerogative of those "happy few that write out of pleasure and not necessity. By that means it's her [Finch's] own fault, if she publish any thing but what's good, for it's next to impossible to write much and write well."[58]

Through her novel, Boyd comes to understand herself as undertaking new possibilities for popular fiction, and she finds that she is not alone in the writing process. Manley, Behn, and Haywood become constants, but she also begins to respond to women from backgrounds and tastes as diverse from hers as Anne Finch's, in order to construct nuanced identifications and dissociations. This implies some authorial validation of past and present writing presences and a stance towards the voices and forms that they chose to speak through.

Scandalous Text and Self-Reflex

An admirer from King's College exults that the young Boyd "teach[es] young Parthenissa's Breast to rise." Implied in Boyd's allegiance to early romance authors is

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[57] Boyd may have disremembered the wording of the poem, as her compression of stanzas one through four replicates neither Manley's 1709 variant nor Finch's Miscellany Poems (1713).

[58] Delarivier Manley, *New Atlantis*, ed. Ros Ballaster (London: Penguin, 1991) 92-3.

her rejection of didactic artists who write to "amend the heart"--not to make it throb. What is perhaps most striking about themes and characters of *The Female Page* is their flagrant disregard for reformative ideals as they were emerging in novelistic, poetic, and dramatic forms. Unlike its more didactic sisters, *The Female Page* refuses the easy assumption that a heroine should stand in as an ideological foil to the privilege and lust that destroy her. The novel refuses what both McKeon and Nancy Armstrong describe as the idealisation of virtues increasingly associated with the bourgeois man and relocated and rooted in traditional female qualities. In does, however, offer powerful and unprecedented critique of the increased valorization of marriage-track narratives over erotic and aristocratic courtship themes.[59]

Responding to her more censorious contemporaries, Boyd may as well have taken her cynical cue from Manley's translated 'Introduction' to *The Secret History of Queen Zarah*. Observing classical romance characters Manley had scoffed that "The authors of romances give extraordinary virtues to their heroines, exempted from all the weakness of human nature and much above the infirmities of their sex." Manley had done part to expose an alternative, some would read more lubricious, side to a woman's make-up. By the 1720's however, new writers on the romantic fiction scene were reintroducing tales that emphasized obstinate female virtues and the existence of a divinely ordered universe. Aubin introduces *The Strange Adventures of the Count de Vinevil and his Family* (1721):

> I present this book to you, in which you will find a story where Divine Providence manifests itself in every transaction, where virtue is tried

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[59] Margaret Anne Doody challenges the claim that the myth of companionate marriage first emerged in the eighteenth century. It is nonetheless a concern that many authors of this time believed urgent. *The True Story of the Novel* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers UP, 1997).

with misfortunes, and rewarded with blessings. In fine, where men behave like Christians, and women are really virtuous, and such as we ought to imitate.

In contrast, the heroines of *The Female Page*, Amanda, Amelia, and Luvania, are enablers whose weaknesses, not actually sexual, threaten not only their own ruin but also the seemingly random destruction of others. The author implies that her own moral stance and expectations from her characters are comparatively lenient:

> [U]pon serious Examination of the three principal guilty Characters, (for the truly virtuous, want no Vindication) the Judicious and Discerning, will, I am conscious, find more Frailties that demand their Compassion, than Vices that deserve their Censure (Preface, *FP*).

It is actually something of a stretch to set down the three female characters as Boyd's referents. Throughout the narrator suggests that misplaced fondness, not sexual desire, is a female weakness, yet guilt still remains extremely difficult to locate.[60] The male characters entice and even force the women to perform guilty acts, as Boyd draws on her predecessors' technique of blurring the boundaries between rape and seduction, political duress and agency. More originally, extremes of evil actions and characters are hard to navigate since virtue itself comes off as impulsive and flawed.

What comes to the forefront when one weighs the comparative faults and virtues of each of Boyd's heroines is the fundamentally unchristian schema that informs the author's world view.[61] William Graves observes this with surprise: "*The Happy*

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[60] It was common to have a secondary female character who succumbs to vice as a scapegoat for authorial criticism and didacticism, as Jane Barker does in *Exilius*. Boyd cannot bring herself to authorial censoriousness, although Luvania is horribly punished for aforementioned reasons.

[61] The novel is "un-Christian" because in the theological-romantic way of resolving seductions, virtue triumphs with a knowledge of heaven as the promised final reward. In novels by Barker, Aubin, and Davys, the spiritual triumphs over the physical.

Unfortunate, within the context of the professed sexual morality of the eighteenth-century English is licentious in its highly romantic encouragement of the un-Christian idea that sexual love, illicit as often as not, can and perhaps should rule things" (Introduction). Dangers to the women characters are neither financial, as in the loss of dowry or inheritance, as often occurs Haywood's fiction, nor are they particularly sexual.[62] While each of Boyd's female characters wishes for a socially-sanctioned relationship, she repeatedly performs narratives of illicit desire, homoerotic masquerade, and pre and extramarital acts. Each is strangely naturalized within its singular context. Whereas characters in Jane Barker and Aubin's novels are examples of virtue in distress, Boyd's Amanda is actually no more or less deserving than the others. The narrator's hasty assurance that she is in the "Care of Heaven, aud (sic) the Villains wicked Design frustrated" because "our Guardian Angel, sheild[s] still the Good" (227) is profoundly unsatisfying, possibly ironic--especially after the "Good" (like the others) has already happily yielded to the Duke's "modest Attack"(17). Good humouredly, the narrator herself is nearly seduced by her own sexy creation: La Motte's "Respect to the Fair-Sex in general so obliging, it oftener gain'd him a secret mistress, than he perhaps desir'd; not that he wanted Fire enough to be amouous, or Words to charm: But there is something so enchanting in a modest Attack, it gains, before *we* hear, or are appris'd of the Danger. Pardon me this Digression"(17).

There are certainly standard episodes of extreme abjection and suffering of heroines in the novel, but they are driven by fatalism and random acts of cruelty. Whereas Christian innocents emerge spiritually unscathed in Aubin's works, they do not

[62] Luvania is cheated out of a rightful inheritance from her husband and later marries for security, but she is sucked into a psycho-sexual rather than a financial quagmire.

have paradisal or pious recourse in Boyd's. Amanda and Amelia are not morally at risk but more corporeally vulnerable to violence and disease. The spiritual and the chaste do not even register.

As the preceding quoted passages suggest, use of self-reflex and the metaliterary in the novel foreground and parody generic conventions and popular expectations of "pious" narrative. Ironic commentary emerges organically, as it were, from an simultaneous heightened awareness of a stylized fictional world and the repeated placement of stylized characters within commonly accepted and debated or nascent forms of social behaviour. For example, repeatedly Boyd registers an ironic awareness of necessary retribution (the convent or death) for illicit sexual love, as traditional narrative patterns dictated that the ruined woman inevitably meets a tragic end. Amanda's confession of her desire to Bellfond provokes a wry comment from Boyd about fictional scapegoating:

> Let the mistaking, the censorious Croud, condemn *Amanda's* easie Givingness; the juster few, nor Censure ought, whilst they're advis'd of every Minute Meaning, and till they know a Tale, reserve a Spleen: Amanda's Life a Woe to come be theirs (64).

Amanda's infamy can not come soon enough for the 'discerning' reader. While not quite openly championing sexual love without recourse to marriage, as, for example, novelist Mary Hearne did before her, neither does Boyd attach moral stigmas to female indiscretions, and she seems to point to the hypocrisy of those who demand it as entertainment. When questions of female innocence and guilt arise, Boyd dramatizes more of an Aristotelean sense of a golden mean than a Christian persuasion of good and

evil.

Further, erotic-platonic decision is by no means conclusive in the novel but rather extant or dramatized as an ongoing dialogue between Amanda and Belville about the true nature of love and respective gender roles. On one side of the controversy, Belville, who transparently has nothing to lose, can persuasively argue for free love:

> [T]o love where we are lov'd is generous Virtue; . . . a Passion uncontroul'd, involuntary, the gratefull'st Charm the God of Nature gives, nor can ought be a Crime that's just and generous! Love that's sincere, is the most happy Friendship; nor can the Censure of the thoughtless Croud, make that Affection Sin, that's built on Merit; nothing but what's unnatural is Vice; Injustice, Rapes, and Murders, call for Vengeance, but where's the Guilt of happy, mutual Love? (112-113)

Although the injustices of Carlos and Beauville to their mistresses point to the fissures in an argument that rests on a sexual double standard, the story takes pains to show that nothing is innately wrong with this kind of arrangement. We are not to mistrust Bellfond's seduction but to see its logic. He was as good as his word to his first mistress, Cleomene, who, unlike her near namesake Cleomira from Haywood's *British Recluse,* was not abandoned by her lover but dies, in a commonplace but gruesome enough manner, in the "Agonizings" of an "abortive birth" (129), as most of the married and unmarried characters do in Boyd's novel.[63]

Radically enough, civilized heterosexual relations in the form of companionate love and marriage are portrayed by the novel as being as terrible and as destructive as any

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[63] Climene was also the name of Sir Bellcourt's secret wife in Haywood's *Female revenge; or, the Happy Exchange*. Like Bellfond, Bellcourt is not held accountable for his shifting affections.

illegitimate sexual arrangement.[64] Amelia is pathological in her pursuit of social legitimacy after Beauville impregnates her, arranges a sham wedding, and then torments her for years with promises of an authentic marriage. When this is eventually achieved, she is made more miserable and is completely effaced as a pining, isolated, and ill character whose husband cheats incessantly. Likewise we are made to feel repelled by fourteen-year-old Luvania's marriage to an impotent eighty-year-old Duke, and the Duke and Duchess Bellfond were already consumed with mutual loathing before the action of the novel begins. Heroines meet very real and nasty demises (from pregnancy and sexual diseases), more often than they do dreaded social deaths for their transgressions. Bellfond's Duchess dies of a unnamed venereal disease, and Amelia, "after some Months languished of a secret illness, the ungenerous Beauville had given her [and] . . . Dyed" (339). Mothers of the central characters are all long dead, usually killed by childbirth complications. ("[A]t the close of Teeming [Amand'a mother] dy'd, worn with still griefs, and weak with many Children.") This is the fate that Amanda herself meets rather abruptly and unexpectedly in the novel's final pages. Knowledge of her own marriage, which spells her death, socially and quite literally, injects traces of cynicism into the familiar vein of contemporary moralists. Boyd reminds the reader of the horrible physicalities that the social world insidiously effects: This marriage narrative, she seems to argue, excites ridiculous expectations of religiously and socially-sanctioned 'happy'

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[64] A common political dimension to works by Boyd's contemporaries (as seen in novels, periodicals, and conduct books) is a bourgeois distaste for the rake and his conferred powers. As John Richetti puts it, the heroines of amatory fiction "speak for a naturalized and universalized humanity; their seducers enact the mechanical sexuality granted them within an archaic class structure." Progressively the latter was vilified and the former exalted. When read in conjunction, the individual love narratives of *The Female Page* expose tensions between traditions of erotic seduction and the growing novelistic approval of chaste-until-marriage love (13-29). John Richetti, "*Love Letters Between a Nobleman and His Sister*: Aphra Behn and Amatory Fiction" *Augustan Subjects: Essays in Honour of Martic C. Batestin,* ed Albert J. Rivero (London: Associate UP., 1997).

endings, but it is really something that should be overcome, not achieved.[65]

In the final moments of the novel we are abruptly told that Amelia dies of a sexual disease, Beauville dies in a duel, Amanda in childbirth, and Bellfond of grief. The novel's ending has been mistaken as hasty: Schofield writes, "The ending is precipitous [sic] . . . Boyd quickly loses interest in her story and is anxious to bring the narrative strands together" (33). But Boyd could be perceived as joining Haywood in the pioneering of the deliberately ambiguous ending, over and above the decisiveness of the deaths that she effects.[66] She cannot envision a future for her characters within the bonds of marriage. The novel's subtitle (*The Happy Unfortunate*) may have been a reversal of Behn's *The Unfortunate Happy Lady*. Whereas Behn's story allows its female protaganist to overcome unhappy circumstances, Boyd's Amanda achieves the socially-sanctioned love she wants, but it can only lead to sickness and death. Not quite satisfied with the demise of the first generation of lovers, Boyd even seems to suggest that their offspring (the few who survive) will repeat the unhappy cycle. Others besides Boyd were reluctant to draw or to imply blissful portraits of married life, but contemporary readers must have been truly struck with the novel's 'damned if you do' outlook. Boyd forces her reader think about entrapments that exist, even in addition to sexual and emotional desires.

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[65] Referring to companionate marriage, Nancy Armstrong claims that "We have no grounds for assuming that such an exchange was intended primarily to keep women in line" (41): *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel* (New York: Oxford UP, 1987). This is not to say that amatory novelists were any less aware of the propagandist motivations of the theme than pious novelists were of their own (stated) reformative agendas.

[66] Paula R. Backscheider, "The Story of Eliza Haywood's Novels," *The Passionate Fictions of Eliza Haywood*.

Conclusion

It has been argued that the strengths of early amatory writers lie in the ability to create a knowing voice that "distinguishes itself as an intelligence and moral sensibility" and creates dialogue with an audience. The disappearance of the technique of a thinly-disguised authorial persona in women's texts in the 1730's has been cited as evidence of the weakening female status.[67] Certainly Boyd does leave much to her reader's own understanding of tone and intention, which has the effect of an implicative and closer read that disallows a reader's feelings of moral and analytical supremacy. Yet this technique has its own appeal. The arrangement of three books replicated in the creation of three male and three female characters allows ironic (triple) commentary on themes of female desire and agency, domestic violence, public opinion, and, more sweepingly, on notions of a private self, service to those in authority, and domestic contract between man and woman. Readers themselves, the author seems to argue, are enmeshed by their own narratives.

Perhaps the lengthy analysis of this chapter overstates the actual importance of a single book. Unlike the *opera magna* (at least to feminist critics) of contemporaries like Haywood, Mary Davys, or Penelope Aubin, Boyd's novel cannot, after all, be said to have altered the course of fiction. *The Female Page* cannot be said, like Manley's *Atlantis*, to have jubilantly exposed the private lives of the powerful as deceptive, money-grubbing, and promiscuous. If anything *The Female Page* could be accused of conservatism, almost defending rottenness in high life and the unscrupulous wielding of

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[67] Kirsten T. Saxton claims, "Toward the middle of the eighteenth century, the direct testimonial began to lose power as narratives that obscured authorial presence under the guise of neutral realism became the privileged form of truth-telling" (139). "Telling Tales: Eliza Haywood and the Crimes of Seduction in *The City Jilt, or, the Alderman turn'd Beau*," *The Passionate Fiction of Eliza Haywood* 115-142.

sexual and political power. It is splendid to know, however, that one woman took a look down the sentimental path that fiction might be venturing down and decided to stay close to home: we still have Haywood's resilience to admire, as she plunged ahead as a reforming force into the 1740's to "rectify some errors" in reckless fiction reading.

As for Boyd, a mere servant of the Court, she makes a deliberate and radical stand for secularised sexual relations and offers bitter commentary on 'right' female behaviours--an implied rejection of the bourgeois sentimental that offers one explanation for her inability to sustain (or her complete indifference to) later novelistic trends.

Furthermore, knowledge of *The Female Page's* themes and influences can help along the current (larger) project of sorting through the mass of fiction by eighteenth-century women. Attention to Boyd's episodes widens our sense of the materials that women writers once felt to be fun, informative, and combative, and such widening is apparently needed. As Kathryn R. King inquires, "How many times are we to encounter discussions of *New Atalantis* that center upon the Charlot episode"?[68] Attentive readings of these early texts not only can legitimate one women's authorship but also the accomplishments of a particular style of writing that was not peripheral but central, important *as* (not *to*) the institutionalization of the novel.

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[68] Kathryn R. King, "Essay Review: Female Agency and Feminocentric Romance," *The Eighteenth Century* 41.1 (2000): 1.

Chapter Four: Miscellanies and Motherhood

Pamphlets and Stationary sold by the Author, who humbly hopes that those of her Subscribers who are not already engaged, will be so good as to be her Customers, whom all possible Care shall be taken to oblige.
"Advertisement" for *The Snail*, 1740.

After *The Female Page's* successful subscription publication in 1732, Boyd was immersed in the retail world of promotional activities, erratic consumer behaviours, penny pamphlets, booksellers, and stationery goods. No record of her daily management of her business out of her home in George Court or her "new pamphlet shop" in Leicester Street (1740-1744) survives, but Laetitia Pilkington ran a similar pamphlet shop in St. James's Street near Boyd's second location, also in the early 1740's, and recorded the rigours of her brief span "behind a Counter."[1] In these *Memoirs* Pilkington complains that on the first day of business customers put her "out of Conceit with [the] occupation." Soon she found that she had to augment a slim income from the sale of pamphlets, so she hired out her letter-writing skills (on all subjects but law), wrote petitions to royalty and nobility for mere pence, and picked up "Bargains of Prints" (ripped from expensive books and sold by owners "under Distress" [213]). Pilkington also accepted portraits cut in velum (on one third commission) and peddled them to nobility. Together with these projects she continued to write poems and to court patrons between serving her customers and when "disengaged from business" on Sundays. Not even this high energy and intelligence safeguarded her from bankruptcy, which could come quickly in the Hobbesian business environment of the early eighteenth century. Pilkington returned from a patron's home one evening to find her "Shop broke open, and every Article of

[1] Laetitia Pilkington, *Memoirs of Laetitia Pilkington*, ed. A. C. Elias, Jr. (Athens: U of Georgia P, 1997).

[her] Wearing Apparel taken away." With "Necessaries" to buy just "to look decent" and a Landlord who quickly "seiz'd for a Quarter's Rent." Pilkington states, 'This Robbery quite ruin'd me" (210-211). And so ended a brief stint of economic self-sufficiency.

Three details about the pamphlet-selling trade emerge from Pilkington's narrative. First, a small or an infant business had to be diversified or supplemented with other money-making schemes. Second, an entrepreneur who was inevitably at the mercy of circumstances and random events had to be resilient enough to break and recover, sometimes repeatedly. Third, a woman in business was treated with scepticism (interrogated about her prices, selections, and literary knowledge), and sometimes even bullied into having to appeal for outside intervention from customers and passers-by.

What is known of Boyd's survival mechanisms in her own trade are that she changed locations at least twice, like Pilkington, to be at the "Centre of my Noble Benefactors" (211). At first she shared her shop in Leicester Street, Westminster, with a sausage maker, presumably to cut costs, unless possibly this "cook's shop, the sign of the Leg of Pork and Sausages" may have been her own way of diversifying her sources of revenue by offering a wider variety of staples and merchandise. Further Boyd continued sending individual poems to patrons for approval and rewards, and she continued publishing to help her shop's initial profits.

From a vantage of literary sales in the early 1730's, Boyd noted publishers sewing together slow-moving pamphlets for resale and also less interesting texts than her own going on the market as "monthly," "weekly," and "Bog-House" miscellanies--wisdom purportedly copied by writers onto the page, straight from the "drinking glasses and

windows" of taverns.[2] Probably she did not feel artistically superior to these anonymous, mostly desperate souls, but respected their handle on popular tastes. She saw an opportunity, perhaps observed old compositions lying by, and had a mind to mixing these with riddles and songs for popular local entertainment: this, she fathomed, she could sell as a fashionable miscellany to any publisher who would offer a quick return.

What materialized in 1733 from the overlap of Boyd's material, retail, and artistic worlds was *The Humourous Miscellany; or, Riddles for the Beaux. Humbly Inscribed to The Right Honourable the Earl of Cardigan*. By E.B.[3] Boyd would recycle the titles of her first two major works in 1745 in 'Bartholomew Broadbottom's' *The Beau's Miscellany: or, the Agreeable Variety, in Prose and Verse*"[4] which contained a reprint of her periodical publication, *The Snail* (1745). Boyd worries in one of the poems about overlapping commercial, literary, and patronage demands on the artist--intriguingly on her mind but also her physical well being. (Pilkington attests to the lone shopkeeper's fits of emotional and bodily exhaustion and faintness [218-19].) Calling a misplaced poem entitled "Shadow," Boyd addresses it as a disobedient but favourite "minion": "I pocketed thee, that I'm very sure, / But Slippery Shadow brookt not such a Lure." Playful puns in this poem, particularly equivoques, are not exclusively comic but also serious

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[2] Hurlo Thrumbo's "The Merry Thought: or, The glass-window and bog-house miscellany. Taken from the drinking glasses and windows in the several noted Taverns" came out in three parts, 1731-3.

[3] At nineteen, George Brudenell was newly created 4th Earl of Cardigan after his father's death in 1732. He would never become a serious patron of poets, although later he assisted the painter Sir William Beechey.

[4] Until now this compilation has never been attributed to Boyd. "The Beau's Miscellany: or, the Agreeable variety, in Prose and Verse. Containing The Snail; or the Lady's Lucubrations. II. Zara and Churchill. A Poem. London: printed by David Simple, for Joseph Andrews; and sold by Abraham Adams, 1745."

about the need to turn "thought" into "Substance" (quality composition but also food to nourish the writer's body). Words that imply material wealth signal equally relevant meanings of social status, service to purchasers, trade weights and measures, and even printing styles. More to the point is the poet's statement that the writer who cannot transfer her art into moveable goods or cash them in will probably starve--put flatly though metaphorically, "go early to Clay Bed" (16).

Probably sheer penury meant that Boyd was neither overly-nice at this point about her choice of a printer for her miscellany, nor was she especially careful of her writing style or even of her artistic reputation. Her pride in spontaneity, "Writ Extempore," is a mannerly way of declaring haste, the impossibility of making textual changes to grammar and spelling or of rethinking her choice of words. (Albeit Boyd never needed the pressure of a deadline as a pretext for singular composition.)

For her miscellany the author stages yet another sort of writing persona (in addition to the scandal-monger, female politician, and romance novelist--"Lovisa," "Louisa," and "new Elisa"). Apart from a short love lament, "Writ under the Impossibility in the Beaus Miscellany, by a Gentleman," all of the poems in the collection suggest the hand of the business women who adopts tones and styles amenable to a fast-moving and cheap-selling pamphlet world that she worked on several fronts.

Judged against the very broad definition of "miscellany" in the 1730's, *Humorous Miscellany* is both representative and highly unusual for the literary moment. It mingles morally serious poems and a made-to-order drollery: verbal games that mean to tickle the reader's wit, memory, or linguistic flexibility. Apropos the subtitle "Riddles for the Beaux," it includes complimentary poems to young peers and artists, though there are

only four actual 'riddles.' The work is unusual, however, in its marketing of domestic themes to a male audience. It includes a number of quality compositions that draw on women's poetic traditions--and these alternate with vulgar jests and poems that advertise haste and lack of polish and pay tribute to aristocratic decadence. (Women's miscellany collections in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries often included jaunty satires, political subject matters, and criticisms of the male world in general, but none that I am aware of styled itself as sensationalist and cheap.) The work merges correct 'feminine' values and themes--emerging sentimentalism (elegies about dead babies) and humorous lampoons of false men, both real and literary--with poems that savour the perceived debasement of taste that, to contemporary critics, the miscellany implied.[5]

"How if the Trifle fails?": Marketing the Miscellany in the 1730's

Miscellany publication has a long history closely linked to the development of expanding reading audiences and to the disintegration of strict divisions between 'high' and 'low' and 'mass' and 'elite' cultures. In each of its distinctive epochs, definitions of the form have been unsettled by questions such as number of authors involved, inclusion of historical or contemporary works, and heterogeneity or homogeneity of styles and themes. A recent broadening of the term to include subcategories and literary periodization makes it necessary to determine the specific purposes and contents of the genre for Boyd's time.

The majority of literary criticism has lighted on Restoration miscellany models or

[5] Ann Messenger captures the approach of many women writers to the selection of miscellany contents. Of Anne Finch's *Miscellany Poems* she says, "tones range from light to fairly heavy, but never approach the merely frivolous or the licentious" (31). "Publishing Without Perishing: Lady Winchilsea's Miscellany Poems of 1713," *Restoration Studies in English Literary Culture 1660-1700* 5.2 (1981).

late eighteenth-century "beauties" or "anthologies." The first included collections by diverse hands, often by members of a literary circle of friends and sometimes designed for expensive libraries. Most notable were the Behn and Dryden-Tonson examples of classical imitations and translations, which included the editor's own works but also promoted the titles of other wits. The assumption behind criticism of both kinds of compilation, single or many-authored, is that writers were initially motivated to write for reasons of art or fame. Packaging was a necessity, an afterthought, or a favour for a friend. From their inception in the late seventeenth century, these miscellanies worked to commercialize elite print culture by educating readers in fashionable styles and aesthetic values, but this didactic (later sentimental) function escalated towards the end of the eighteenth century. At this time publishers rather than authors took over the duty of selection and organization, and works became accessible to wider reading audiences.[6]

These 'coterie miscellanies' were joined, perhaps even supplanted in popularity during the first half of the eighteenth century when audiences expanded to include middling readers who wished to purchase entertaining works at a cheap price. As Laura Mandell observes, "One can see in titles of collections published throughout the eighteenth century a split between, on the one hand, mirthful (often vulgar) and pornographic, often aristocratic collections, and, on the other 'serious' melancholic poetry" (*Misogynous Economies*,113). The miscellany expanded at this time to encompass a wide variety formats and contents. Earlier miscellany patterns included "sheafs of political tracts, essays on parliamentary debates, taxes or religious issues, or

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[6] Barbara M Benedict, "The >Beauties= of Literature, 1750-1820: Tasteful Prose and Fine Rhymes for Private Consumption, *1650-1850," Ideas, Aesthetics, and Inquiries in the Early Modern Era* Vol. 1 Ed. Kevin L. Cope (New York: AMS Press, 1994): 317-246.

practical prose georgics on such country topics as husbandry. As Benedict points out, subsequently the 'miscellany' came to connote variety and brevity: a selection of short, light pieces, often humorous or satirical" (407).

The low cultural status of these early-century formats may account for their being the least studied of all the miscellany forms. Although both Swift and Pope would publish shorter pieces in miscellanies, they felt that the format encouraged sloppy composition. Swift's "On Poetry a Rhapsody," which first appeared in London the same year as Boyd's miscellany, envisions garret poets joining "Pericranies," and behold, "Out skips a Book of Miscellanies." As Swift suggests, these light collections were often written for sheer desperation for money, and they were published anonymously and frequently aimed at very specific and often less literate audiences. A glance at the *ESTC* suggests that publishers in the late 1720's and early 1730's targeted audiences of the trades and lower-professions: domestic servants, doctors, drapiers, threshers, and weavers. As well, during the decade from the early 1720's to the early 1730's, collections of readings were designed for the edification and sometimes the pure entertainment of women. Female readers were pinpointed as consumers of didactic or entertainment collections by male writers and editors but also evidently by female retailers. Daniel Bellamy's *A Young Ladies Miscellany: or youths innocent and rational amusement* (1723) offered advise to women from men, though it was "Written for the particular diversion and improvement of the young ladies of Mrs Bellamy's school in Old Boswel Court." Mrs. Bellamy and a Mrs. Wood possibly sold it after commissioning the work. Other similar examples include *Ladies Miscellanies, by the most eminent hands*, reissued by Curll three times from 1718 through 1732; F D. Assigny's *The ladies miscellany: or, a*

curious collection of amorous poems and merry tales (1730); and a handful of similar collections that included love poems and letters and typically covered topics such as dressing, court intrigues, and religion.

The distinctive roles of women as producers of these readily available, 'subliterary,' and often urban texts remain to be explored; and final answers may be unrealizable because of the wide-spread anonymity of authors, especially those of low-brow miscellanies. Traditionally women have been associated, as they are in current recovery projects of eighteenth-century women writers, with more literary miscellany formats. The definition of "miscellany" (also familiarly known as "Poems on Several Occasions") that recurs in criticism and anthologies is a large collection of works, usually poetry though sometimes accompanied by a prose pieces, written by an individual author and printed in a single run. These collections were often printed by subscription as charitable endeavours, sometimes published posthumously by a relative or admiring friends, and (much) less often by the author who plainly wished to promote her works. They were printed for reasons as varied as Mary Chudleigh's wish to share her "innocent amusements of a solitary life" and Elizabeth Thomas's sudden need to publish to avoid "unforeseen and unavoidable ruin."[7] They were collected after considerable individual labour over a long period of time, though most authors would also include works by friends, and although they are currently identified as a popular form for women's writing, it was still comparatively rare before 1733 for women to publish their collected

[7] "Prefaces" to Chudleigh's *Poems on Several Occasions* (1703) and Thomas's *Miscellany Poems* (1722).

life works in miscellanies, particularly under their own names.[8] This became a more favoured format later in the century when women writers and reading audiences expanded and miscellanies became synonymous with etiquette, manners, and morals, though the 1730's marked the start of this growing trend (Benedict, "Literary Miscellanies" 417).

There are reasons why it is not very useful or even accurate to compare Boyd's early compilation with other single-author miscellany publications by women. Her format offers some clues to the conditions of publication that are unlike other "poetic" compilations by men or by women. Firstly, her miscellany is significantly shorter, 32 pages comprising 28 poems, as compared with the 250 or so page average of her predecessors.[9] These longer works were most often published in octavo format, whereas Boyd's is a quarto production. Barbara Benedict suggests octavo publication of later eighteenth-century miscellanies communicated the privacy, didacticism, and 'femininity' of certain works, whereas the quarto was reserved for men of the upper end of the social spectrum. Earlier in the century, however, there seems to be little correlation between formats and the gender or social strata of authors or readers, or even the content of miscellanies. However, quarto production may signal entrepreneurial thinking: the work is aimed at broad audiences, and its sales would logically be helped by added mass, as

[8] I count ten poetical miscellanies (first editions) published by women under their own names between 1660-1733: Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle, Anne Bradstreet, Katherine Philips, Aphra Behn, Sarah (Fyge) Egerton, Anne Finch, Jane Barker, Mary Mollineaux, Elizabeth Thomas, and Mary Chudleigh. Elizabeth Tollet and "Ephelia" published pseudonymously. Mary Monk and Anne Killigrew were published posthumously by fathers. Many more, however, may have published anonymously or were included in the miscellany collections of other writers.

[9] In contrast, for example, Mary Master's *Poems on Several Occasions* (1733) was 267 pages and Mary Barber's *Poems on Several Occasions* (1734) included 132 poems. The shortest miscellany of poems printed by a woman before Boyd that I could locate was *Poems by Mrs. Anne Killigrew* (1686), printed posthumously by her father. It is still a lengthy 120 pages.

Boyd's is by the inclusion of larger print, titles, and sheets.

S. Slow (Sloe), Boyd's publisher for this production (and this one only) had a shop "over against Devereux Court without Temple Bar" (1732-3), and he was one of the primary publishers of the sort of miscellany that was filled with anonymous works and light and amorous verses, especially those that contained Court gossip. It seems, though this is conjectural, that Boyd's only dealing with this man was not only brief but also maybe belligerent. Many of the poems in *Humorous Miscellany* state they were composed swiftly. They were not advertised prior to publication in any newspaper, and they were printed with large type, probably on poor paper, and sold very cheaply.[10] The speaker of the poem that opened this chapter, "On Losing the Copy of Shadow, after reading it to a Lady. Writ Extempore," claims that a certain output (bulking up the volume) was expected before she would be paid. Even afterwards, if the work failed to sell, then she and her publisher would be "bit" financially, with the additional sense of imposed upon by that swindler--popular taste. (For the loss of one poem, "the *Bookseller*, I've cheated him, will swear."[16]) Boyd suggests that she made an initial agreement with her publisher on such points as the number of poems expected and the forthcoming commission to the author that was dependent upon sales.

Secondly, Boyd's miscellany is unlike any of her female contemporaries' in its prefatory statements (presuming prefaces and dedications were included in eighteenth century works to establish interpretive guidelines and to dispel reader anxieties about

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[10] Philip Gaskell claims that prices were calculated by sheet at this time, and the median retail price for publishers in the 1730's and 40's was 2.4*d* per sheet. (179) *HM* was sold for "1 shilling," roughly .75d per sheet. *A New Introduction to Bibliography* (New York: OUP, 1972).

moral and political contents).[11] The word "Humour" in Boyd's title implies pure recreation and diversion which the traditional "Ladies Library" or "Poems on Several Occasion" often withheld. According to period definitions "humorous" meant capricious, odd, or fantastical. (Even so, we shall see that the themes of some of her works are severely misrepresented by this implied triviality.) Her preliminary material is very brief, simply including the dedication to the Earl of Cardigan and a poem that announces urban themes that are available to all conditions of readers:

> Humour, the Comic God, by vary'd Ways,
> Aims to obtain, from all, the Laureat Bays;
> Flatters our Foibles, laughs us out of Folly;
> Smiles on our Faults, and heals our Melancholy.
> How if the Trifle fails?—Why we're but bit:
> We did our best, to ape the Modern Wit.
> Dull serious Things are often very Trifles;
> The Statesman, and the Trader it amuses;
> Nor Corporation, nor Excise abuses.

Boyd states that her work is a hasty and modish venture that promises amusement, not serious politics, high art or reformative sentiments. She unrepentantly aligns it with miscellanies of low status and does not advertise, as other women did, by appealing to the good will of readers, promising religious meditations and innocent poetic diversions, or apologizing for going public (this woman's poetic baubles "lay in neglected silence"

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[11] Jon Thomas Rowland, *Faint Praise and Civil Leer: The Decline of Eighteenth-Century Panegyric* (Newark: U of Delaware P, 1994) 124-144. Rowland claims the literary prefaces framed an audience, told how a work should be read, and provided authorization from a noble.

until present circumstances etc.). Compare Boyd's abrupt introduction with Sarah Egerton's apologies to Lord Halifax in her *Poems on Several occasions. Together With a Pastoral* (1703): ". . . I durst not presume on your Protection of these Trifles, some of the first Attempts of my unskilful Muse. Most copies being writ 'ere I could write sentences. . . ." It was the privilege of the virtually anonymous miscellany (published under an author's initials) that it could demand "bays" from the ordinary reader without any pretensions to literary importance or politeness. The omission of a personal appeal altogether helps broaden an audience to include the leisured and less fastidious male "beaux" outside of upper-class circles but also outside of prescribed 'feminine' interests.

This is, thirdly, where Boyd's production is unlike women's miscellanies--at least by those authors who are known. The work links itself to the 'masculine' world of mercantilism and the Excise Crises, even if it is to offer relief from these concerns. The poet apparently calculated on public boredom with the sharp debate on Walpole's Excise that had crammed ballads and newspapers for a year or more[12] and reckoned that the work would sell better if E.–B– did not announce her sex. (All the same, first-person narration and feminist themes signal her gender soon enough.)

Having secured an audience, Boyd apparently felt comfortable that the whimsical and liberating tone of this kind of miscellany would permit blunt feminist commentary on the professional and remunerative concerns of the female artist and bookseller. If Boyd felt disempowered by her gender in her trade, she soon discovered that the miscellany could substitute print power for public tools that were unavailable to small retail owners,

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[12] In 1733 Walpole wished to impose an excise tax on wine and tobacco in order to check smuggling and to reduce land taxes. It was extremely unpopular among the London merchants and provoked widespread reaction against his administration, which was saved only by his withdrawal of the scheme.

especially women. If, for example, she could not wield intimidation tactics or the threat of costly legal proceedings for unfair consumer or business practises, the businesswoman could form compensatory strategies; specifically, striking at the reputations of her adversaries through print. "Capt. D—s" (Capt. Dives of her subscription list?) borrowed a pamphlet, soiled it, and refused to pay for the loss, so Boyd makes it known to the public that his stinginess with women is proof of his tepid patriotism and the cause of his loss of a valuable government post:

> But know, young Captain, when your Orders come,
> For Spain's Gibraltar, or for Port Mahone.
> If so you sculk from War, as now from Pay,
> Disgrace attends you, to your Dying Day.
> Vain mean soul'd Fop, poorly to wrong a Woman,
> And glory in't, because the Fraud is common

The author argues her case through different voices, alternately displaying vulnerability, righteous anger, and as cited above, some highly competent hexing. It is uncertain whether Boyd threatened the man with defamation prior to its print (as Pilkington did on occasion), but she knew there was always an audience ready for a blood-letting (one has only to remember the throat-slashing attacks of Pope, Hervey, and Montagu at this time). Punishment could run the gambit from personal discourse in private letters (rumours of character faults circulated among influential friends) to more commercially useful tactics, such as Boyd's poem. Clare Brant writes, "this is a period in which anonymity and scurrility were profitable parts of print culture. Pilkington herself occasionally wrote blackmail letters for selected clients, [and for her own use] and [Charlotte] Charke takes

lodgings vacated by a person to whom she delightfully refers as 'a celebrated Dealer in murdered Reputations, Wholesale and Retale [sic].'"[13]

The psychological tension between the world of commerce and the world of (private) gentility gets played out in a second invective on another crass and "Base sordid Fop" (Boyd's favourite epithet for mercenary men) who left his mistress for a rich widow:

> But know the slighted Nymph will never be
> A Bridal Slave to such a Wretch as thee,
> Too well she knows thee, mercenary Knave,
> A churlish Elf from Cradle to the Grave
> – – – – – – – – – – – – – – – – – –
> Gold may, perhaps, support thy Timber Trade,
> Better than stealing Planks in Masquerade.
> Yet recollect, thy Name's upon Record,
> Where wert thou now, had'st thou had thy Reward.

Mr. B–K is an 'impresario' of trade and romance; the "Planks" of his sordid business smack of the theatrical performances of the suitor and the business propositions of the director of masquerades. This exposure through rumour takes its cue from *Moll Flanders*, who noting that the "Market run very Unhappily on the Mens side," resolves to have one man's depravity spread among all the women to ruin his credit.[14]

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[13] Clare Brant, "Speaking of Women: Scandal and the Law in the Mid-Eighteenth Century," *Women, Texts, and Histories 1575-1760,* eds. Clare Brant and Diane Purkiss (London: Routledge, 1992) 254.

[14] Daniel Defoe, *Moll Flanders* (New York: W.W. Norton , 1973) 59.

We know Pilkington's shop was a site for conversation and gossip. Though she never utters it herself, it is apparent to her reader that she benefited artistically, as Boyd presumably did, by standing behind her counter observing her sympathetic and (perhaps especially) her odious customers--whom she caricatures in print. If the business exposed the tradeswoman to the scurrilous dealings of love and trade, it also afforded her plenty of material for public consumption. Boyd can only muse that once she knew "There liv'd a Race of honest Men; / Whereas there's now, scarce, one in Ten."

"Oh! That Louisa could like Goddard praise": The Business of Flattery

The wide-ranging themes and verse forms of the *Humorous Miscellany* are consistent with the tone and patterns of short verse collections of the early eighteenth century. It includes riddles, epigrams, sentimental elegies, songs, pastorals, political squibs, and ballads. Titles range: for example, "A Song, made at a Lady's Toilet whilst she drest at Windsor," "A Song: Design'd for the Ridotto. Tune of Three Children sliding on the Ice," "On Solitude. Writ when in the Country," "To Lady Cowper on her Birth-day," and "Verses writ Extempore, at Request."[15] (According to Pilkington, the last form was a particular "Request," whim or poetical test, devised by patrons--presumably to gauge the willingness or worthiness of suppliants.) Conspicuously absent from Boyd's repertoire is the fable and, unsurprisingly, the hymn, but it is in every other way consistent with

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[15] *HM* includes several pieces written for the "ridotto," a term that defused the moral stigmas of the "masquerade." Boyd sports with the moral stance of pamphlet writers who claimed the "ridotto" encouraged intermingling classes: "Miss in Brocade may strip your Watch, / Th' embroider'd Spark your Jewels catch." (17) Virtually all eighteenth century poetic collections included songs but dropped tune directions for ballads and ridottos. Merely naming an air was no guarantee of musical knowledge; in fact this particular tune, "Three Children," was common and was printed by W. Waystaffe in 1712 and Mary Cooper in 1744. Audiences matched topical contents with traditional tunes that caught all levels of readers, and emphasis was on mood rather than on story

miscellany styles. It was standard to intermingle tones and forms, to ignore chronology and generic distinctions, and to amuse with pleasing elegies and short expressions of wit.

The author's inclusion of several occasional and encomiastic poems to nobles is likewise customary, as the miscellany was not immune to the kind of name dropping that declared one's place in political or literary culture and allowed readers to become privy to this private circle (in Boyd's case probably a circle of friends that fell somewhere between the exaggerated and the fictional). Naming of prominent sponsors provided some lustre to attract and then to guide public tastes, and as stated, verse compliments supplied a supplementary income to trade.

Most miscellany publications from this time were printed anonymously because booksellers chose to publish according subject rather than author. Therefore anonymous and initialled works were often "meaningful only to readers already familiar with the author's work or the circumstances of the collection's production" (Benedict, *Making the Modern Reader*, 13). Each of the encomiums and occasional poems in *The Humorous Miscellany* addresses a subscriber to *The Female Page*, thanking but also perhaps preserving the more useful of the author's connections. Again, as she had in the novel, Boyd states that valuable people read her poems in manuscript (or she mentions reading poems aloud), implying that she gained cultural boosts by placing people in advisory roles. Despite the sycophantic tone of the verse dedications, it is extremely important for this particular "Venture"(6) to emphasize professional investment in literary production, so even when Boyd identifies herself with a private coterie audience and hints at some degree of repute, she returns to the theme of poetic flattery as pure business.

Among Boyd's 'meaningful' verse compliments are two epithalamiums, one on

the occasion of the marriage of Juliana (widow of Perigrine Hyde, 3rd Duke of Leeds) to Charles Colyear, 2nd Earl Portmore,[16] and the other on the marriage of Anna Maria Mordaunt to Stephen Poyntz.[17] The latter is especially significant because it tightens the weave of one of Boyd's suspected networks of support. For also included in the collection is a birthday poem addressed to Sarah Cowper, addressed interestingly and affectionately as "Sacharissa," presumably emulating Edmund Waller's poetic name for Lady Dorothy Sidney. Three years earlier Boyd had dedicated a poem to the teenaged Cowper sisters and to their brother William, 2nd Earl Cowper. The abovementioned Anna Maria Poyntz and Lady Sarah Cowper were very close friends throughout their lives, as they were near in age and had mutual friends.[18] Sarah's sister Anne, married in 1731 to James Colleton, seems to have dropped patronage after her subscription to the novel. The friendship between Anna Maria and Sarah, however, included Anna Maria's husband, Stephen Poyntz, and Sarah's brother, Spencer Cowper, and may have fostered further patronage arrangements, of which Boyd's was the first. Both Spencer Cowper and William Cowper subscribed to Sarah Dixon's Poems on *Several Occasions* (1740),

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[16] Leeds and Portmore were married 7 Oct 1732. He was a Whig who bred famous race horses and was, likely, unrelated to the Hyde family of another of Boyd's encomiums in *HM*. The title of their wedding poem, "Love Triumphant over Grandeur," is ironic since Juliana often insisted on the title "Duchess Dowager of Leeds" though she eventually settled for "Countess Portmore."

[17] Stephen Poyntz became Ambassador to Sweden in 1724 and Steward to the Household and tutor to William, Duke of Cumberland in 1730. Under "Marriages," Feb 1733, the *GM* reads, "Stephen Poyntz, Esq. To Mrs Anna Mordaunt, and recieved 3000*f* as a Royal Bounty, she having been Maid of Honour to her Majesty." She was the niece of Charles Mordaunt, 3rd Earl Peterborough, and a famed beauty of Caroline's court.

[18] In her will Anna Maria Poyntz refers to her life-long companion as "my dear friend Sarah Cowper." PRO 11/972 453 Nov 1771. Sarah had died Sept 1755. Stephen Poyntz's will is testament to this friendship. He gives directions to his wife but also, intriguingly, jointly to Sarah Cowper and her brother, Spencer Cowper. PROB 11/785 18, 1751. There is a chance that mention of or even letters from Boyd are included in the Spencer of Althorp papers Add. MSS 75460 and 75461, the personal papers of Anna Maria Poyntz and a volume of correspondence between the two women. The contents are currently being sorted and in a state of disarray. Frances Harris, e-mail to the author, 21 July, 2002 and John Oliphant, e-mail to the author, 5 August, 2002.

and Anna Maria Poyntz was a patron of Sarah Fielding from 1749 until Fielding's death.[19] It seems that the families supported a number of women writers, as they had secured subscriptions for Boyd from among their friends and relations. Anna Maria's sister Sophia and her cousins on her mother's side, Mary Collyer (not the novelist and translator) and Sophia Hamilton, subscribed, as did a handful of Mordaunt relations, including Anna Maria's cousins Margaret and John.

Many of Boyd's personal poems are ballads, labelled "Songs" (the same style as her longer verse pamphlets, which are properly called "ballads"). Two of these are part gibe, part personal compliment, and they may have been influenced by Boyd's publisher who, as mentioned, undertook Court gossip in miscellanies throughout the 1730's. "A Song, made at a Lady's Toilet, whilst she drest at Windsor" flatters a particular Hanoverian "Nymph," her "Beauty" and lustrous "Charm" pointing to the favoured Amelia, but also conceivably Anne, Princess Royal, courted by William of Orange.[20] In this poem Boyd may be declaring her allegiance to the royal women and Court women in general (the King is ignored), as "Windsor Castle" was the realm of the Queen and Princesses and disliked by George II, who preferred Hampton Court.

The princesses are plagued with pesky suitors in this poem and in "Verses occasioned by a Fly's winging its Way into the Eyes of a beautiful Lady, when in the Country; from which uneasy pain she was relieved by the Goodness of the Handsome

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[19] See the dedication of *The Governess* in which Fielding praises Mordaunt after her marriage, for she then turned her "Thoughts" from Court and applied them "to all the Domestic Duties that Situation requires, and made the maternal care of her Family her first and chief Study" (87-90). *The Governess or, the Little Female Academy*, ed. Jill E. Grey (London: OUP, 1968).

[20] On 8 May 1733 the King announced the Princess Royal would marry the disfigured William Charles Frisco, Prince of Orange, Stadholder of Holland. Publications such as Anonymous, *The Secret History of Mama Oello, Princess Royal of Peru. A New Court Novel* (1733) hinted that Anne had feelings for another unnamed English Lord.

Dutchess of -----Written Extempore." The second poem alludes to Gay's Fable VIII, "The Lady and the Wasp," which tells how a beautiful woman's "eyes dispense their charms" only to draw flies and wasps, which she is unsure whether to encourage or banish.[21] As for its particular meaning, it may refer to the Duke of Grafton and Princess Amelia scandalously disappearing together for a day from Windsor. It probably answers the general satires on Lord Hervey and the Court women circulating after 1731, though Boyd's poems are considerably kinder than Pope's cruel satires which target Hervey's influence: devilishly whispered into the "ear of Eve." The poems are unusual in that they show the mutuality in the relationships between peers of the realm and the women of George's Court, who are neither scheming nor so easily manipulated as they appear in opposition texts.[22] (They preserve the *semper eadem* of former English queens: "Whilst you, unmov'd by thousand Darts, / Continue still the same." [9]) The second poem is an unusual gendered reversal of this motif of male manipulation and seduction of female innocence, as the "fly" in the poem is also conceivably Anne Vane, who would gull the very willing and yet unwitting Prince Frederick and Lord Hervey: "Vain busy Fly, by beauty's Ray's undone, / Vain to attempt to blind the radiant Sun . . . . Say, should the favourite Man whom we approve, / By Arts thus inconsistent sue for Love, / Would we not soon resent the bold Essay, / And quickly drive th' Impertinent away."

Three gentleman professionals, also subscribers to *The Female Page*, are

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[21] In addition to Gay's fable, an anonymous poem, "A Poem to a Widow, Upon a Fly Getting into her Eye," appeared as a broadside in 1726.

[22] George Lyttleton's misogynist text *Letters from a Persian in England, to his Friend at Ispahan* writes that the King's ministers "never suspected" the women "had a Genius for publick Business, and that not only their own Families, but the State it self, might be govern'd by their Direction. They are now convinc'd of their Mistake. Several Ladies appear'd together at the Helm." *Letters from a Persian in England, to his Friend at Ispahan* (1735).

addressed in separate occasional poems. Boyd praises these men for successfully negotiating the ranks of politicians and peers and fashioning names for themselves by assigning heroic qualities to inexperienced nobles. She compliments John Lockman, amateur poet, translator, and librettist, for his "Excellent Ode to his Grace of Buckingham, 1730," (Edmund Sheffield, 2nd Duke) "on his embarking to France."[23] Here Boyd attributes the traditional "god-like" qualities of the topical hero to the poet himself, for he can "form" the "young Patron," until "Buckingham in Lockman does excel." Although Boyd laments her own talent by comparison, "My Verse too rude, nor knows my Muse to tell," she could appreciate a strategy which resembled her own recruitment of young aspirants. A very brief country-house poem also compliments the amateur architect, Theodore Jacobson, for accomplishing his architectural design for his "Retirement, called Lonesom, or Jacobson's Grove."[24] Although these two men seem like strangers to Boyd, she hints at a closer literary relationship (perhaps on a more equal footing because of his, apparently, young age and equally humble status) with "Mr. John Goddard," who had subscribed to *The Female Page* and evidently knew her as "Louisa." She had heard rumours of Goddard's depression and pleads with him not "to forsake the Muses." Again her tune is epideictic: high praise of the man who can "Paint ev'ry dawning Virtue with that Grace, / And unborn Ages with that Judgement trace." His

[23] Lockman had published very little before 1733, though he was currently involved in the compilation of *A General Dictionary Historical and Critical* 10 vols. (1734-41), and he would go on to write occasional works, songs, a musical drama, *Rosalinda* (1740), and A *New History of England* (1746). He had subscribed to two copies of *FP*. He addressed poems to Mary Caesar and Anne Finch. Caesar MS 62559, BL. In 1733 he was living and working in Lincoln Inn Fields, but his letters make no mention of Boyd.

[24] Jacobson's family managed the London Steelyard. He was appointed by the East India Company to design buildings in Leadenhall St. (completed in 1729), and he would design the Foundling Hospital in 1742. According to Howard Colvin's *Biographical Dictionary of British Architects 1600-1840* (London: J Murray, 1978), his country home until 1763, "Lonesome Lodge" or "Tillingbourne," near Dorking in Surrey was not built until 1740. Boyd's poem claims it is "new-born" in 1733. The *GM* cites "T–r J–b Esq.; on the Sinking Fund," March 1733.

subsequent publications prove he rallied from an unnamed 'malady,' possibly bankruptcy,[25] but Boyd declares sympathy with another soul in the business of patronage.

There is one domestic elegy in the collection, "On the Death of the Excellent Mrs Hyde, Wife to Capt. Hyde," to "her Daughter." The girl's identity is a mystery, but she may be Christiana or Charlotta Hyde who subscribed to *The Female Page*. Though largely unremarkable, the poem mingles Muslim, Christian, and classical imagery, and it is the first of several of Boyd's works to visualize a dead "Matron" keeping watch as a "Guardian Houri" over her children.

At first glance, one exception to the overwhelmingly feminocentric tone of the miscellany is "The Dispute: or the Religious Ladies," a remarkably coarse and rollicking song that gossips about the unneighbourly behaviour of an old Scottish woman to a pleasant young Irish woman. Boyd's unrelenting satire of the first (anonymous) woman is rescued from the domain of misogynist satire because it admires the cheer and liberated attitudes of the Irish girl and critiques the other woman's antifeminst dourness and hypocrisy. The speaker is remarkably uninhibited: the poem's "prate" about "Fornication," satire of "Platonic love" and the pious elderly, and its offhand allusions to abortions build to a challenge to religious "Men of Sense": "For no Religion e'er was meant, / To make Debates, but to prevent" (24). The subtle feminist innuendo that men in authority limit the range of female behaviours and so cramp their potential for goodness rescues the poem from gender though not necessarily class, religious, and racial bigotry. (It is also regional satire of northern England and Scotland, and like *Variety* it

[25] This may be the John Goddard who was an early book engraver, though according to the poem he was writing poetic "praise." Boyd's poem suggests that in 1733 he was young and "mourning." He was living in Cambridge when he subscribed to the novel in 1732; although, the *GM* Feb 1733 records, "John Goddard of St Martin's in the Field--Bankrupt"--reason enough to "forsake the Muses."

parodies the perceived superstition, self-righteousness, and social mixing of dissenting and intense faiths, "Religious Movers of Opinion" [*V*, 26]).

In keeping with the broad theme of commerce in the Miscellany, the poem also looks at the headway made by another sort of 'career women'; for "Board and Bed" the Irish woman advances from "Carrier's Brat"[26] to procuress and midwife dabbling in "White-pots, Creams, and Jellies," to "Doctor's Maid," then "Widow-gay,"and finally a religious hypocrite who dupes "the Godly and the Sage." Also like *Variety*, the work sports with idiosyncratic diction: "Arch-Dowdy," 'Younker," and "POW."

"The Dispute" is cynical about childbirth merely as a business that takes care of the fallout from illicit sex, but perhaps the most remarkable of the poems in the *Humorous Miscellany* are those that take a more serious (raw and rare) glimpse at the integrated topics of childbirth, infant mortality, and maternal poverty, which most poets at this time ignored or treated as plot devises. The following section will look more closely at the important theme of loss in childbirth in the *Humorous Miscellany*.

The "Unhappy Babe": Childbirth and Loss

In "The Religious Ladies" abortion is a quip ("promote lank or Big-Bellies") that does not offer anything original to the motif of the procuress as abortion specialist, a common target of both feminist and anti-feminist satire, including the now familiar "Mrs. Night" and "Mother Midnight." However, Boyd had already alluded, originally and non-judgmentally, in *Variety's* attached heroic poem "Macareus to Æolus" to the reality of abortion, which was often a deadly as well as a condemned procedure in the eighteenth

[26] This may be a satire of the carriers Boyd dealt with in business, whose job it was to carry loads especially for merchants and grocers.

century.[27] This earliest published work of Boyd's sets out to prove Canance's unwilling role in the conception of her child, her "Mother's Pangs" and "Grief" (84), and the innocence of her newborn who is murdered by its grandfather. Canance's initial failure to abort her justifiably unwanted baby (the product of incest) with the aid of "Gums"[28] suggests that the procedure is unreliable but nothing like the dire sin of infanticide--presumably a very unusual stance to assume. The work, in general, attempts to redeem the corrupted sister from Dryden's version of mutual desiring and guilty siblings, and it leaves the reader with a "sense that women who have gone through this [childbirth] are in some way entitled to understanding from those who have not borne children, and to forgiveness if they need it"(Grundy, "Delivering Childbirth," 15). The classical ill-fated Canace was only the first, though certainly the most devastated of Boyd's dozens of unhappy mothers scattered throughout her works, some receiving brief mention and others detailed and solemn treatment.

Boyd's initial promise of "Humourous" diversion in the miscellany is seriously misleading, as three poems about dead babies escalate in sheer awfulness: "On the Death of an Infant of five Years Old" (11), "On the Death of an Infant of five Days old, being a beautiful but abortive Birth" (18), "On an Infant's lying some Days unburied, for Want of Money, the Father being absent and ill" (24-5). These poems suggest that Boyd's

[27] Of course its unlawfulness makes it impossible to know how many women resorted to abortion and were harmed or killed by desperate doses. The topic of abortion was rare in an age that was reticent to talk about birth in general. It is apparent from Isobel Grundy's study that if the act featured at all in fiction it was violently punished, as in Phoebe Gibbes's *The Life and Adventures of Mr Francis Clive* (1764), where the pregnant maid Hannah drinks a potion and dies convulsing ("Delivering Childbirth: Orlando Project Encoding," 11).

[28] Pomet's *History of Drugs* (1712) cites "gum resin" as an emetic or purgative. The gum resin from species of Euphorbia was used as a drastic purgative in medicine and may have been used in Cadance's botched abortion attempt. Lawrence Stone cites potions made from the tops of savin bushes that could be bought in London, and also "physical maltreatment of the womb," hot baths and heavy purges (325). *The Family, Sex and Marriage In England 1500-1800* (New York: Penguin, 1979).

feminist politics were taking a realist turn in her short elegiac works, and that she was taking a more assertively feminist stance about issues surrounding childbirth. The quality of the second and third 'miscellany' childbirth poems, in particular, may point to earlier composition than 1733, as they are so unlike the lighter poems in their style, tone, and theme, and while many of the others seemingly made it to the press just under the wire, the childbirth poems showcase a more deliberative and lyric side to Boyd's writing.[29] Their inclusion alone also belies the work's general claim to be disinterested in political meanings (a subject I will address later).

The first poem is the most conventional of the three. It addresses the angelic innocence of childhood and closes with a sense of the balance between traditional religious consolation for a single child's death and the (Biblical) anguish of a community of mothers:

> Dear pretty Babe farewel, a blest Adieu;
> Wou'd I were half as *blest*, as guiltless too.
> For thee, dear Angel, tho' we drop a Tear,
> Thy certain Happiness dispels our Fear;
> So when the *Innocents* by Herod died,
> More Saints rejoic'd, than earthly Mothers *cry'd*. (11)

This is the most public of Boyd's baby elegies. The afflicted monodic voice of the mother is reserved for more private expressions of grief and anger at social dependence and gender inequities, as seen in Boyd's second and third poems. (Cultural grief is emphasized in this first poem with the use of the pronoun "we" as formal singular or as

[29] The first infant poem was anthologized by Fullard, the second by Lonsdale; a browse through online syllabi establishes that currently it is the most widely-read by students of all of Boyd's works.

familial or communal plural.) Previously, 'Letter Three' of Elizabeth singer Rowe's *Friendship in Death* (1728), "To the Countess of ***, from her only Son, who died when he was two years old," popularized a privileged celestial view over a grieving human view of death. This, according to Rowe's 'Preface,' was to "impress the Notion of the Soul's Immortality; without which, all Virtue and Religion, with their temporal and eternal good Consequences must fall to the Ground."

Appearing in 1733 in the *Gentleman's Magazine* was Mehetabel Wright's "To an Infant Expiring the Second Day of its Birth." It better resembles Boyd's second baby poem, "On the Death of an Infant of five Days old, being a beautiful but abortive Birth" (18), especially in its awareness of the birthing process and the fetus as corporeal rather than religious 'matters.' In Wright's poem, the "convulsions," "unresisting heart," "swoon" and the "Latest, fiercest, vital pains" of a slow-dying infant are equivalent to the terrible birth pains and subsequent disappointment of the mother. Likewise in Boyd's poem sorrow is a physical expression: breast, womb, heart, and (hard) delivery. Birthing images do not follow sequential order of childbirth, child death, and then grief, but are interactive and reverberative:

> What dire convulsions rend a mother's breast,
> When by a first-born son's decease distressed.
> Although an embryo, an abortive boy
> Thy wond'rous Beauties gave a won'drous Joy:
> Still flattering Hope, a flatt'ring Idea gives,
> And whilst the Birth can Breath, we say it lives.
>
> -

Some flying hours the mother-pangs beguile;
The pretty mouth a Cupid's tale expressed,
In amorous murmurs, to the full-swoll'n breast.

Inheritance, primogeniture, and marriage, usually momentous themes in literature, are bitterly de-emphasized--hollow losses in comparison with the present death of the living creature. The line "The darling man was with less love caressed!" privileges the mother's feeling for her child over the patriarchal expectations of baby as an heir, or more exceptionally, the mother's epiphanic preference for the newborn baby over her husband. The poem also registers the emotional indifference of the father. Poet and grieving mother both seem to break out of reflection in the final lines of the poem, to exclaim together, "Oh! Could the stern-souled sex but know the pain, / Or the soft mother's agonies sustain, / With tenderest love the obdurate heart would burn, / And the shocked father tear for tear return."[30] From its blunt treatment of physical pain to its bleak statement about a woman's sorrow in marriage, this poem is also probably the subtlest expression of personal grief of all of Boyd's baby poems.

The most difficult read of Boyd's miscellany triad of dead baby poems is "On an Infant's lying some Days unburied, for Want of Money, the Father being absent and ill"(24-5). It radically rejects Christian and communal comfort and instead points to economic injustices surrounding birthing. It is in rhyming couplets but uses an octave sestet structure that first envisions poverty that cannot even afford a grave for a dead baby and then gives way to the impoverished mother's utter despair, unalleviated by Christian faith or human sympathy:

[30] Isobel Grundy writes, "It is now the disappointed mother's relationship with her husband, rather than that with God, which faces crisis." ("Delivering Childbirth: Orlando Project Encoding," 15).

When tender Mothers lose a long-wished Heir,
They feel the poignant Tortures of Despair;
But oh! When Poverty's the Curse of Fate,
And shrouded Babes on Jilting Fortune wait,
The Mother's Agonies what can excel?
What can express, or what Idea tell?
Inhuman Shock! What Horrors rend the Breast?
When by distracting Grief's the Soul deprest?
Where's Fortitude when Nature bleeds with Woe;
When Friend's forsake, and ebbing Fortune's low?
Unhappy Babe, no Father hail'd thy Birth,
Not knew thou wast deny'd the Common Earth.
Absent and ill; for each the Mother bled,
The Father dying, the dear Infant dead;
Ten tedious Days, the melancholy Sight,
Drew Tears, that once gave Raptures of Delight. (25)

This poem is most unusual for its refusal to see motherhood as a great leveller among women. Although maternity may be gender imposed, its outcomes are explicitly class determined. The stock expressions "long-wished Heir" and "Raptures of Delight" belong to high-minded upper and middling themes that do not address the most fundamental problems of childbearing. With a proto-gothic touch, this mother watches her baby decompose in a shroud rather than live in swaddling-clothes; she "bleeds" without recourse to medicine; she is abandoned by supposed "friends" of a civilized society: the

medical establishment and undertaker (both presumably observe she cannot pay), her family and female friends, and the father of her child. His absence seems an unintentional "Jilting," his illness and death all part of her (and indeed his) general misfortune. Yet the resonance of "no Father" in 1733 may also point to the passage of the Bastardy Act that year, which obliged women with illegitimate children to name the fathers who would hypothetically go to jail until they gave security to indemnify the parish of the expense. This poem speaks for those women who for reasons of death do not even have recourse to this hard necessity of the abandoned and the poor.

The *Humorous Miscellany* signals a turning point in Boyd's works which would see a sharpening awareness of tyranny of rank and gender played out on the physical bodies of women. Even as Boyd would begin to indulge sentimental tastes, her awareness of what was gendered female was becoming increasingly secular and conveyed assertively, even angrily, to a wider audience than the heroic and classically-inspired Canace had appealed. It is intriguing to think that the writings of a ill, poor and, presumably, childless poet imaged the ideal woman as powerfully maternal, as Boyd did in the decade between 1733 and 1745. This gesture was not as fashionable as it first sounds (in other words conforming to the idealization of domestic women and the prevailing ideological constructions of 'femininity' in the periodical and in the emerging novel.) Whether duchesses or wretches, these women are too 'full-bodied,' and in some cases militant to conform to the sentimental maternal which gained dominance in the mid century. Boyd sees these women as piteous victims of politics, legal prejudices, or even domestic violence and salvages them to avenge their own wrongs and those of their offspring.

The following section will look at Boyd's evolving interest in the emotive gothic, both for its known capacity to kill the patriarch who used his power in brutal ways, and its ability to express the emotional and physical effects for women of violent sexuality and childbirth. She assigns the maternal ghost what would later become prerogatives of the gothic male tyrant: not only extreme rational capacity but also the power to inflict immobility and emotions of dread and despair her most obnoxious victims.

"Injur'd Catherina calls": Ghostly Mothers and English Scandal

In 1729 Mary Hodson, a laundry maid, and Elizabeth Hopping and Elizabeth Letchmere, both serving maids, spied through the keyholes and the open shutters of Sheffield House to observe their mistress having adulterous sex. Later, when a trial for damages took place and Elizabeth Hopping was asked by Counsel for the Plaintiff why, through all she observed, she did not "acquaint her Lord of it?" she replied that she presumed that he would not believe her and besides "no Person dare open such a Thing to his Lordship." Whatever their private grounds for silence (but to each other), these women were relieved of the task of initial informant by the "Gentleman" and the "Porter" to the injured Lord. The first, a Mr. Matthews, was ringleader and an excellent strategist who determinedly monitored the couple's illicit patterns, gathered averages of the times and places of intrigue, and summoned a third witness to catch the guilty pair in the act. On the morning of November 13, 1729 the three men waited three hours at the keyhole of a bed-chamber, inauspiciously called the 'White Room,' until they heard a rumpus at nine o'clock. They approached the bed "softly" and ripped open its curtains, Matthews triumphing, "So then!" The reaction of twenty-four-year old Katherine Neville, Lady

Abergavenny, daughter of stern General Tatton of Middlesex and wife of William Neville, 4th Baron Abergavenny, is unconfirmed. One account remembers it was a pitiful beseeching, "Dear Matthews do not ruin me," another thought it more of a premonition of historical fact: "I shall be ruined."[31]

These lurid details and further 'ocular evidence' supplied by these spying servants indicate that Richard Liddell did indeed "debauch [and] carnally know" Lady Abergavenny, and yet it was always suspected that the husband had a hand in orchestrating the event with the idea of securing financial damages from her lover. Even the male servants' repetition in court that they acted on behalf of Lord Abergavenny all along seems to support this speculation and yet the husband's potential connivance could not do what her death would to redeem Katherine Neville in the eyes of the public. Six hours after she was spied in this "very indecent posture, and in a very great surprise," the heavily pregnant woman was turned out by her husband and then her father and not long afterwards she died in childbirth. These events and the court proceeding against her lover, Richard Liddell, played out in 1729 and early 1730, but Katherine Neville's sins were revisited long after in publications of the scintillating proceedings against her alleged lover, and in more sympathetic and altogether more romantic literary contexts.[32]

By the time Boyd remembered these events fifteen years later in the poem "William and Catherine or, Justice Triumphant," included in her periodical publication

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[31] An account of the tryal of Richard Lyddel, Esq.; at His Majesty's Court of Common-Pleas, before the Right Honourable Lord-Chief-Justice Eyre, for carrying on a criminal conversation with the late Lady Abergavenny; on Monday the 16th of February, (1729/30). Tobias Smollett narrates the story of the Annesley case in *Peregrine Pickle*, though his editor James Clifford does not observe the extensive quotations in Smollett that were drawn from this particular trial account. Tobias Smollett, *The Adventures of Peregrine Pickle,* ed. James L. Clifford (Oxford: OUP, 1964).

[32] For a brief discussion of the poetic responses to the case, see Isobel Grundy, *Lady Mary Wortley Montagu* 296-297.

called *The Lady's Lucubrations; or The Snail* (1745), they had circulated, as Boyd gruesomely puns, as a "long hears'd singular Tale"(30). Purportedly the poem about Lady Abergavenny in Boyd's periodical was sent to the periodical's persona, 'Eugenia,' by her friend. This friend, "Eloisa"[33] (presumably another variation on Boyd's pen name "Louisa"), is self-professed "Lover of her Sex" who claims that she is compelled to write "in Behalf of a greatly injured Lady" [26]). It is the larger project of *The Snail* to praise female friendship and altruism in women and to revile selfish materialism of the rich and powerful, such as the recently dead Duchess of Marlborough whose proved will and codicil confirmed her failure in feeling towards the poor, especially the widows and orphaned children of her husband's campaigns. Boyd dedicates the poem "William and Catherine" to "G-- Lord A--," George, Lord Abergavenny, eldest son and heir of William and Katherine Neville. The "tyrant" (27) husband and father had died in the fall of the previous year, so it was fitting to rekindle the crimes of the mother at the moment of transfer of inheritance to the son.

Evidently Boyd saw resemblances between the "barbarous Severities" (29)in the Abergavenny case and a contemporary scandal that emerged in a Dublin courtroom in November 1744. Here it was told how the mature son of Arthur, Lord Altham, had returned from the continent to claim an inheritance usurped by his uncle, who had sold him into slavery and made attempts on his life to frustrate his legitimate claim to earldom. Boyd states in her introduction to her broadside poem "Altamira's Ghost; or

[33] The periodical is also published under the pseudonym 'Eloisa,' though its narrator is 'Eugenia.' Perhaps Boyd wishes to highlight the monologue tradition of Ovid's and Pope's "Eloisa to Abelard." 'Eugenia' ('nobility' or 'excellence') was the name of a third-century martyr, but had become a favorite complimentary name assigned female friends in literary works. Mary Chudleigh, for example, addresses *Poems on Several Occasions* (1703) to "Eugenia." Submissions to the *GM* under this pen name in the early 1740's have been attributed to Susanna Highmore Duncombe, but a valid claim could be made that these were Boyd's poems.

the Fair Spectre, a Tale" (1744)[34] that she is "Fir'd" to rage (and to write) by this story of a child who was disowned by his father and very nearly murdered by his greedy uncle:

> [T]he inhuman Treatment of an Orphan, friendless and young, and of a Noble Race, defrauded by a Villain Guardian Uncle, an Emulation to do Virtue Justice, where it's most wrong'd; and expose glaring Vice in its true Colours inspir'd me with a Zeal sincere and honest, and dictated this artless, well-meant Trifle, which will, I flatter myself, amid the Croud of Authors on the Subject, be well received. Excuse a Woman's Errors.

What is different about Boyd's poems from others that took up these popular events is that she offers the opinions of the dead mothers of the wronged children. Their physical bodies before death (sexual and childbearing bodies) were pivotal to both trials. Damages obtained from Richard Liddell obviously demanded proof of sexual relations, and what had begun as a property suit in the Altham case quickly turned into a filiation proceeding. The prosecuting lawyer had alleged that the claimant was not really Lord Altham's son at all, and "in order to support the Possession of the Honours and Estates belonging to the . . . Plaintiff, that my Lord Altham had a Son, it will be necessary to shew his Lady's pregnancy, the Birth of a Son."[35] To Boyd, a dead mother's reputation and by extension the fundamental integrity of all mothers was being litigated in the

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[34] If 'Eugenia's dates in *The Snail* ("November 30, 1744") are to be trusted, the periodical was published in 1745 but written the same year as "Altamira's Ghost." The latter was Boyd's final work to be printed by Charles Corbett. It was advertised in the *London Evening Post* April 20-24, 1744: "This day publish'd, Price 6d." It was printed under the author's initials.

[35] Presumably Boyd garnered information from extensive coverage in the *Gentleman's Magazine*. "An Account of the Great Trial between James Annesley and Richard, Earl of Angelsey" (Jan-Nov 1744), 25-29, 87-90, 141-3, 205-7, 255-9, 316-24, 373-9, 431-5, 489-94, 537-42. The published depositions offer detailed if conflicting impressions Mary Sheffield, Lady Altham, her miscarriages, and her alleged affair with "a poor, unbred, simple country booby, whom [her husband] had decoyed into a snare, [and who] lost one of his ears."

newspapers and broadsides of London and Ireland.

In "Altamira's Ghost" and "William and Catherine" the misery of orphaned children motivates the visitations from maternal ghosts, Altamira and Catherine, whose hard lot in life and sentimental love for their babies completely absolves them from the demand for savage reprisal from the men who ruined their reputations. Both poems draw on the court depositions of the sensational cases, one contemporary and the other revisited, "to do a great deal of Justice to the Memory of the unhappy injur'd Fair" but more particularly to offer "the Poet's free Thoughts" concerning "Inhumanity of the rigid husband" (*S*, 32). Although "Altamira's Ghost" addresses a brother-in-law rather than a husband, this uncle, Richard Anglesey, was publicly renowned for cruelty, not only to his nephew (Mary Altham's son), but also to his wives. The first he deserted and the second unsuccessfully brought proceedings against him in the ecclesiastical court in 1741, on grounds of cruelty and adultery (*DNB*, 479). Further, it also comes out in testimony that violence was rife in the family. His sister-in-law, Mary Altham, (James's mother) had miscarried because she had "received a Fright" by her husband (Arthur Annesley) "throwing, in a Rage, some Saucers into the Chimney near her" (*GM*, 27). In "Liquor" he had abused her servant, and he eventually forbade his wife to see their child and refused her father's request to make a proper settlement on her, the consequence of which was her poverty and possibly even her death.

The fact that William Neville, Lord Abergavenny, was recently dead and Arthur Annesley had been dead for seventeen years suggests that Bóyd is largely uninterested in seeking revenge on these particular husbands. (She does recognize that "murdering" someone's reputation after death is "so barbarous, so savage," so some retaliatory

motives may mingle with her loftier goals.) Her theme aims, however, at urging "caution" in husbands who would "blast"(27) the reputations of the mothers of their children. Boyd also expresses a distaste for reckless reporting (the public's urge to know), as well as anger at the unequal legal conditions of the sexes.

Seeking out experiences of domestic violence in artistic works of the eighteenth century yields few thoughts by women on an issue, and particularised accounts of physical and sexual damage are especially rare. As Boyd's poems suggest, however, the gothic mode permitted articulation of the unhappy experiences of women, namely domestic violence and physical and emotional abuse. It also offered the necessary physicality to express fantasies of inflicted suffering on men who had effected violence on women and often on their children. Betty Rizzo claims that the gothic form was "suitable to the inferior author because it involved the emotional response to evil of the impotent--discomfort, fright, terror, or horror."[36] While seeming to fall back on period prejudices that assigned literary superstition to emotional and 'weaker' artists, Rizzo expresses the power of the gothic to explore physical and emotional impotence in life. Early in the century it was penned as a retaliatory and astute sort of political journalism.

The Journalistic Gothic and Domestic Violence

The romance novel had long been the forum for women to conceive of violent retaliation for sexual exploitation and social ruin. Legions of Isabellas, Violantas and Lovenias

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[36] Betty Rizzo, "Renegotiating the Gothic," *Revising Women: Eighteenth-Century "Women's Fiction" and Social Engagement,* ed Paula R. Backscheider (Baltimore: John Hopkins UP, 2000) 58-104. Rizzo's novelistic schema is wholly inappropriate and inapplicable to gothic texts written before the 1760's. It does not account for the fascination with and even the recommendation of gothic modes by figures such as Dryden, Addison, and Pope, nor does it consider the self-conscious and rational use of the gothic by authors on the other end of the social and literary spectrum of greatness.

hacked off limbs, gauged out eyes, and plunged daggers into the hearts of men who had abused them. Hauntings by wronged women also occurred as romance tropes, as in Penelope Aubin's *The Life of Madame de Beaumont, a French Lady* (1721), and *The Life and Adventures of the Lady Lucy* (1726), and *The Merry Masqueraders* (1730). (In *Lady Lucy* a ghost of a murdered woman returns to bloody her lover's nose.) These feral impulses were something the psychologically attuned novel of the 1740's failed to absorb--fantasies of bloodbaths, often imaged as gestures performed for the good of other women.[37]

It seems that between 1737 and 1745 Elizabeth Boyd was under the spell of ghost-lore. Readers had another decade to wait for the quasi-gothic novelists, and a full two before they could fully indulge in the, by then, formulaic patterns of incarceration, terror, and despair. Nevertheless hauntings at this earlier moment offered a curious medley of their own. Writers, varied in their status and interests, fashioned pathetic ghostly ballad heroines and conscripted phantoms to express taboo political allegiances and opinions. They created the atmospheric and meditative mode of a modern gothic style. Illness may have caused Boyd to brood on themes of death, or maybe she realized that the pathos and gore of the occult were permissive at a time when tastes veered towards the reformative.

Occult writings of enduring popularity had already been seen in works by Daniel Defoe, such as his *An Essay on the History and Reality of Apparitions* (1727). His broadside periodicals and books that consider hauntings demonstrate a philosophical

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[37]Josephine Donovan, "From Avenger to Victim: Genealogy of a Renaissance Novella," *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature* 15 (1996): 269-289. Paula R. Backscheider, "Woman's Influence," *Literature and the Novel* 11:1 (September 1979): 3-22.

logic and rational sequence and do not rely primarily on the emotive. For lack of a better term this kind of writing, though sundry in style and purpose, will be referred to collectively hereafter as 'journalistic gothic.' In this kind of journalism, which purports to be authentic, the female ghost is given unearthly power to expose, malign, and avenge and to voice the experiences of women who could not speak in life. Demonology of this literary kind included the hypothesis that a spirit is a ministering figure, both a figment of the imagination and quite literally an angel of God, rather than the actual soul of the dead.[38] Such stories, Addison argues in his *Spectator* no. 419, had the literary appeal of "strangeness and novelty" infused with the lingering authenticity of philosophical and religious word of "truth."[39] A 1730's reading audience may have entertained simultaneously a sense of Defoe's brand of occultism and the more cynical sense of the supernatural as trope--atmospheric or sublime. Stories that included the former had the lingering advantage of being accessible, absorbing, and brief, and they offered advice to readers from conversations held between the living and the dead.

Perhaps the most famous example of this literary kind is Defoe's "A True Relation of the Apparition of One Mrs. Veal the Next Day after her Death to one Mrs. Bargrave at Canterbury the 8th of September, 1705" (1706). Its power to reveal women's hidden experiences of injustice has traditionally been overlooked by critics. It relates how at the very moment of her death a young woman who had long suffered "fits" pays a comfort call on her childhood friend, Mrs. Bargrave, who believes that she is entertaining

[38] Richard Titlebaum, "Some Notes towards a Definition of Defoe's Demonology," *UNISA English Studies* 14. 2 (1976).

[39] Joseph Glanvill and Henry More's *Saducisimus Triumphatus: or, A Full and Plain Evidence Concerning Witches and Apparitions* was condensed to Glanvill's *Philosophical Considerations* and reprinted as late as 1727. John Dee's *A True and Faithful Relation of what passed for many years between Dr. John Dee . . . and Some Spirits* (1659) and Thomas Brown's *Letters from the Dead to the Living* (1702) were still popular.

her living friend. For years Mrs. Bargrave had endured a "husband's barbarity" and "ill-usage," but sympathy between the friends was longstanding. As children and into their youth, they were united by a love of reading and, presumably, by a mutual experience of a father's cruelty, an "unkind father" in Mrs. Bargrave's case. Adulthood and the fact of marital abuse had proven more isolating, for in the course of the story, the abused woman must forgive her friend, who is presumably more at liberty on account of her spinster status, for not keeping up the acquaintance. Empirical attention to detail and alleged accuracy is balanced with psychological innuendo. The ghost speaks to the abused woman, rationally enough, of Christian forbearance:

> be comforted under your afflictions, and believe that the Almighty has a particular regard to you; and that your afflictions are marks of God's favour, and when they have done the business they are sent for, they shall be removed from you .... For, I can never believe ... that ever God will suffer you to spend all your days in this afflicted state.

As the narrative proceeds, little signs or physical "marks" of discord (bruising?) gain equal interest with theological intention. Ritualistic tea service, suggested by Mrs. Bargrave, is refused by the literally and, perhaps, socially disembodied Mrs. Veal, who replies to importunities to drink: "I'll warrant you, this mad fellow, (meaning Mrs. Bargrave's husband) has broke all your trinkets."[40] She wrestles with her friend's reserve and bid for concealment as she ministers to her spiritual needs.

In the end Mrs. Bargrave may owe her assurance of eternal Salvation to the "visit," but more certainly she owes the ghost or angel her liberty of speech. For after

[40] Clare Brant writes, "Tea acts as a synedoche for socially closed female talk, a class and gender-bounded paradigm simultaneously characterized as trivial and harmful" (248).

discovering the full magnitude of the event, she must speak about the neighbourhood of the miraculous spiritual mission, and thereby must include the fact of the violence towards herself. Our narrator assures his reader, "had it not come to light by accident, *it* would never have been made public [my emphasis]," and through the transgressive private speech between women, the story enters the public realm of scandal. Although the most mean-spirited of neighbours may disbelieve the gothic contents of the story, even they can only do so by acknowledging her as an abused wife: "sure a bad husband has crazed her."

Defoe claims that this story was first circulated orally, and it is intriguing to speculate that conjuration was a coping mechanism for historical women. It brings to mind, among other instances, the famous Cock Lane ghost. In this celebrated case a parson's young daughter, Elizabeth, helped conjure. The ghost in question was Fanny, known to be pregnant by her sister's husband and lodged with this brother-in-law at the parson's home. After Fanny's death Elizabeth was accused of counterfeiting sounds by tapping a piece of wood she kept in her bedclothes. The girl claimed to have special knowledge that Fanny had been poisoned by her lover. Though it was suspected the parson involved his family to avenge an unpaid debt, it was young Elizabeth who had shared a bed with Fanny. Is it possible that her tappings enabled her to bear testimony to explosive family relations to which she was confidante?[41] Even if the story of poisoning was false, in both ambiguously fictional and actual instances, the real horror was perhaps not that of the unknown, however gruesomely or imaginatively portrayed, but of an

[41] Oliver Goldsmith disagrees. His 1762 pamphlet, *The Mystery Revealed,* sets out to prove that London's obsession with ghosts, gossip, and religious fanaticism ruins the reputations of honest people. He claims, justly perhaps, that Fanny's lover behaved like a devoted husband and would have married her if legally allowed, and that she died of natural causes.

actual lived distress. The ghostly interpreter/ judge can, for once, offer a clear lens through which to see a very unhappy woman's life. As Defoe writes in *The History and Reality of Apparitions*, the spirit is an "unrestrained, unlimited being . . . it can act in an invisible and imperceptible manner . . . it is not to be shut in by doors, or shut out by bolts and bars."

The ghostly presences of the women in "William and Catherine" and "Altamira's Ghost" enable Boyd also to visit the taboo or even unimagined and unarticulated events of physical and emotional abuse and even marital rape. The *Gentleman's Magazine* alone had devoted over fifty pages to the gruelling succession of verbatim answers to interrogatories that pivoted on the question of the fidelity of Mary, Lady Altham, but despite labourious details in both cases, neither woman, Boyd argues, was accorded fair expression (legal representation) of her personal afflictions. How, she asks, can the printed deposition claim to find empirical truth without registering the emotional actualities of these women's lives, which included unhappy motherhood, prolonged psychological abuse, and maybe even battery?

Eliza Haywood's *The Adventures of Eovaai* tells of Princess Yxmilla's violent "forced marriage" and wedding night, but sexual brutality within marriage is an unusual topic.[42] As spectres, Katherine and Altamira are physically disembodied and out of harm's way, and yet they are also physically-intense markers of bad marriages and dangerous childbirths, events that were circulated in private gossip but remained outside

[42] There are particular late-century instances in novels in which women attempt to reconcile their suffering in marriage in terms of moral and Christian duty, such as Frances Sheridan's *Memoirs of Miss Sidney Bidulph* (1761). In *An Unfortunate Mother's Advice to her Absent Daughters* (1761), Sarah Pennington hints that her husband misused her physically, and certainly he mistreated her emotionally. Realistic accounts of marital abuse exist in two later texts, Wollstonecraft's *The Wrongs of Woman: or, Maria* (1798) and Ann Wall's *The Life of Lamenther* (1771).

the scope of legal comprehension. Prefacing "William and Catherine" is a violent image of the husband "murdering" his wife's reputation: "How tender is the Sore? What Salve can heal it? Returning Kindness very poorly skins it; the Wound bleeds fresh on every slight Occasion" (*S,* 27). The dead women are alternately described as "Seraphic beauteous" (35) and then "awful" ("Altamira," 3). Catherine's "gloomy, sad" (*S*, 35) sighs and whispers imply grief, but also, perhaps, the characteristic gruesome sensuality of the ghostly bedside appearance. (It traditionally includes a kiss or even the carnal embrace of the dead and the living beneath winding sheets and within the grave.)

The domestic relationship between husband and wife hinted at in the poems includes sexual violation and subsequent suffering in giving birth. In marrying William, Lord Abergavenny, Katherine had married her dead first husband's cousin and heir to his estate.[43] Boyd evokes lurid images of what a sexual life with this second husband might have been like. The man was "impatient for his Cousin's Widow" but subsequently treated the mother of his children as a "*quondam* Mistress" (30-31). The ghost claims that she as "exil'd Wife [I] / Bore your severest Hate." The child was the "Work" of this husband's force and revulsion, not his love, his "Sport" or, as Katherine grimly puns, "of thy wanton cruel *Will*" (37).[44] The speaker breathlessly depicts the sexual life she endured before this calamity of adultery: "I was but a Child, / By thee, injurious, wicked Man, / Nam'd Liberties more wild. / Whilst thoughtless I, daily repeat / The aggravating Crime; / Such to thy jaundic'd Breast, it seem'd" (38). His own sexual depravity first corrupted her body and then thrived in his imagination as a phantasm of his (really

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[43] This first marriage to Edward Neville, Lord Abergavenny, was itself a famous Fleet marriage.

[44] Defoe observes in *Conjugal Lewdness* (1727) that rape could occur within marriage.

innocent) wife's perversions. Eugenia, Boyd's periodical persona, frames the story of Katherine Neville, Lady Abergavenny, by moralizing in prose to her male audience,

> hence learn, ye jealous Husbands to be just, nor lightly hear your better Half accus'd by venomed Tongues, who would asperse an Angel, so they could serve their Spleen or Av'rice by it; whilst you, too late, repent unnatural Deeds, barbarous Severities by you enforc'd, haply contrary to your milder Natures, excercis'd on a Wife, to please a Friend. (*S*, 32)

By listing what had taken place before the pregnancy, Boyd describes the husband's legally sanctioned appropriation of his wife's body as a morally indefensible usurpation. He defiled her innocence and then betrayed her to his friend (Richard Liddell), and so she suffered the worst injury that the female gothic could imagine.

The poems also recreate childbirth pain and unconditional maternal love to render depictions of the emotional pain of victimhood more vivid and to augment the dastardly act of wife abuse. Eugenia makes the emotional pain of domestic suffering deplorable by framing the poem with a description of the personal sacrifice involved in giving birth to the tyrant's child. In her periodical Boyd also addresses "The Fair Sex in general," to obtain forgiveness for the "blooming Wife" (Lady Abergavenny) and to rouse hatred for the man who "can cooly spurn her from his Bed and Arms, with Child by him, and nigh her Time of Travail" (31). The historical Katherine Abergavenny had been in an advanced state of pregnancy when driven from her home,[45] and Boyd's graphic description of her delivery displays gothic terror at abandonment and at the torture of labour, espécially in isolation.

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[45]The "Tryal of Richard Lyddell" claims that Katherine left her home willingly.

> Behold her Sighs, her Tears, her speechless Meltings! See her on Nature's Rack, in a strange Being, where all she sees augments her growing Woe, and agonizes strong, the parting Pang! that kills the Infant in the Mother's Womb, who very quickly follows her young son. (*S*, 32)

As she speaks to her dying husband, the ghost Catherine actually holds the abortive birth in her arms and, with "flowing Eyes," speaks unreservedly of the "bleed[ing]" (37), "matchless Sufferings"(38), and the"Pangs beyond a Tongue" (36) involved in birthing and then losing a child. (Clara Reeve's maternal spectral presence in *The Old English Baron* [1777] is mild and tender by comparison.) Her ghost is alternately detached and then intimate, inflicting mental and physical torture in obedience to divine command, but forcing a husband and a reading audience to confront the actuality of events that were legally inconceivable but lingering in what was not said during her trial--that "guilty or not" (29), she was a mother. Having had time, seemingly, to reflect on the sequence of events, Catherine can accuse her husband: "Torn from a Sire and Husband's Home, / The infant forward sprung. / Late was the Hour! Dark was the Night! / When by no Creature own'd! / Wanting Relief, press'd by the Birth, / I knew not where I roam'd" (37).

Whereas the event of birth seems to purge the women of all their physical sins, the dying men are afflicted with pains of remorse and approaching death that are similar to childbirth but without the same redemptive outcome. Both plead fruitlessly from their death-beds, as the women had in their moments of giving birth. They "struggling lay," "heaving," giving "hideous Roar," sickened by the fear that they may be dying--"agonizing Thought; I go, --but--Whither, Where" (41). Like the expiring mother's, William's final instructions concern the management of his children--there is little

chance he will be spiritually redeemed Hope does rest, however, with the subsequent generation of men, the remaining heir and Boyd's addressee, "Catherine's Georgy" (George Abergavenny), who is advised to be "just" and good to his "Sister dear," if "he expects to prosper here, / Or reach the Realms above."

'Bearing' Witness: Mother as Judge and Jury

The gothic motif of "Altamira's Ghost" and "William and Katherine" also enables Boyd to widen her satirical target from individual men to include ideologically-motivated institutions. Textual concern with legal injustices surrounding the trials stresses feminine vulnerability under the law. The precise but ironic use of legal vocabulary in the poems also demonstrates that if they were not disbarred as female, these women would be able to use the weapons of law effectively and for more moral purposes than the law-givers themselves. Yet to "do Virtue Justice" (Altamira, 2) the dead must issue warnings, advice, and even prophecies, as well as emotional testimony held as higher 'truth' than that of human judgement.

What specifically appalled Boyd about the scandalous court cases pivoting on the alleged sexual transgressions of the two noble women was the moral value of persecuting people who were unable to defend themselves (alive or dead). Further, while dragging out specious and sensational testimonies without the physical presence of prime witnesses, Boyd noted, the legal process failed to register the underpinning violence of these women's lives, and, she argues, the new media colluded with legal discourse, for not even "the silent Grave" will "end her Disgrace, whose Infamy . . . are yet on record in the Lawyers Annals" (*S*, 31). Consequently, Boyd implicates the professional

establishment by setting out to broaden the contemporary confidence in the legal creed *audi alteram partem* to comprise the opinion that neither should "any *woman* should be condemned unheard." The poems invent demonstrative rather than hearsay evidence of innocence, and this 'proof' takes the spectral form and the *viva voce* (legally, "living voice") of female apparitions.

The appearance of Altamira and Catherine as avenging angels (or ghosts) at the side of the deathbeds of their persecutors had a tradition in literature. It draws on similar stories of forced penitence included in the 1744 edition of Mark Akenside's *The Pleasures of the Imagination* where matrons tell of ghosts who bring hell round murderers' beds. These tales were most often perceived as women's stories in which apparitions occupied ambivalent spaces: between the malicious and angelic, intelligible and silent, dangerous and ineffectual. Boyd also relies on the contemporary uncertainty surrounding the ghost's agency, whether it was heaven or hell bound, in order to describe women's complex reactions to powerlessness.

Both works, but particularly "William and Katherine," also imitate the ballad form, especially the immensely popular motifs of the sentimental and awful ballad "William and Margaret," which recurred as a type throughout the century. The epigraph to "William and Katherine" quotes "William and Margaret," "Bethink thee, William, of thy Fault, / And let thy Pity hear the Fair, / Thy Love refus'd to save." This ballad and its variants see a woman's phantom return to the bedside of her false lover, and it administers a simple moral lesson of faithfulness to one's betrothed through the ghost's affecting understatement, minimal self reference, and pathetic beauty. The underlying motif is of doomed courtship and shared romantic fate, which Margaret cannot vocalize

but can only evoke in others. She is not a real person but a gentle sign of the initial betrayal, whispering, "Are you awake, sweet William? . . . / Or, sweet William, are you asleep?" She feeds her lover's emotional self-indulgence and guilt and is the stimulus for sadness rather than terror. Aaron Hill, in particular, was immoderately affected by the pitiful visual imagery of the poem, the stock contrast, for example, between Margaret's "lilly" hand and her "sable shroud."[46]

The jilted "Margaret" apparition lends itself nicely to representing the suffering of the woman who is on exhibit yet completely powerless to help herself; as the two noble women were present in whatsoever form legal counsel and witnesses chose to conjure up during the trials. This particular, traditional ballad, however, is an unlikely fount for effective vengeance, as it privileges the grim but affecting silence of the ghost (Margaret) and reifies traditional romance tropes which Boyd sets out to undermine. At the time of the actual Abergavenny scandal, literary response lighted on Lady Abergavenny's frailty, and Charles Beckingham, whom Boyd greatly admired, wrote "The adulterous lady Abergavenny's apology to her husband" (1729) in which Katherine Abergavenny as Calista, or the guilty character in Rowe's *The Fair Penitent* and Pope's "Epistle II," argues in an amorous vein against sexual double standards. Earlier poems about Lady Abergavenny also reach a kind of closure in her pathetic acceptance of death to end her

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[46] The ballad appeared in 1611 in Fletcher's Knight of the Burning Pestle. Variants appeared throughout the eighteenth century as "Fair Margaret and Sweet William," "Margaret's Ghost," and "Fair Margaret's Misfortune." Aaron Hill made the poem famous with his praise of David Mallett's version in *Plain Dealer*, no. 36, July 24, 1724. Boyd seems to quote from a broadside variant. Hers was not the only adaptation of the poem. See also, "A Young Lady of Quality G—e and D----y; or, the injur'd ghost. A true tale in imitation of William and Margaret" (1743).

sorrows.[47] Boyd's women, however, are empowered by the uncanny and the maternal, each a victim guiltless of "a Suspicion a plotted, hell-bred, groundless Falsity, to stain her Honour and undo her Ease" (*S*, 32). Further "William and Catherine" negates the more familiar elegiac and romantic readings of the tragedy by rejecting the story of a mutual love affair between Katherine and Lord Liddell. The husband simply uses his wife to indulge his friend's desires.

Always partial to invective, Boyd found a conduit for the spirit of revenge and for brusque action and dialogue in the emotive blend of ghost story and ballad. She applies the ballad metre and models her opening stanzas of both poems on Margaret's extraordinary bedside appearance, but creates ghosts who act in the tradition of Jacobean theatrical ghostly power and articulation. The more fearful plots of traditional ballads, open as they were to uncanny events and perverse impulses, offered readers escape from civilized responses to social injustice. It was an efficient form for social protest (hence Jacobite ballads), as a cruel logic often emerged from the encouragement of irrational feelings. Emphasis in the poems is placed on the threatening demeanour of the ghost, rather than the moderating influence of the angel, the quiet reproof of the ballad ghost, or the acquiescence of the wronged wife. The ghosts terrify with sound and movement, voice passion and an urge for revenge that exists outside of failed legal injunction and human authority, especially outside the span of female authority. Altamira bluntly accuses her brother- in-law of oppressing innocence (3), her own and her child's, and Catherine calls her husband a "perjur'd Ingrate" (Snail 36). The women are convincing

[47]"A Poem, Sacred to the Memory of the Honourable The Lady Abergavenny" (1724) writes, "In the cold Mansions of the silent Grave, / May Her Remains a Sanctuary have" and "May all her Faults for ever be forgot." Beckingham writes, "And who did e'er lost Innocence regain? / Death's the best Law to set the Wretched free."

legal and spiritual councils, witnesses, and judges. Catherine and her child capture Abergavenny's attention by appearing "Lov'ly as Light" (35), but soon demand his submission. Altamira is masterful throughout: "Grimly and stern she looked on him, / And trembling held the Shroud. / Majestiek was her awful Mien, / Her Accent loud and shrill; The Curtain parted with her Touch." Power that is "Stern", "Majestick" and "parts" the way with a touch hints of the patriarchal command of husband or judge. Ultimately the women are full participants in a divine judgement that is at once physical and decisive: they witness "Roars, groans and screams," as the men are "downward hurl'd, / To Horror's darkest Cell" ("Altamira," 8).

The notion of "truth" shifts throughout Boyd's poems, standing in for natural (maternal) rather than institutional law, but also exposing the "unnatural" custom of spousal obedience, and ultimately inverting it, as dead Lady Abergavenny can command, "injur'd Catherina calls; / False William must obey" (36). Both poems also recognize that English legal discourse, scandal-mongering, and hauntings all share one potentiality in common: unreliable witness, both ocular and conceptual. Dryden argues in "Of Heroic Plays" (1672) that the haunting "depend[s] not on sense and therefore [is] not to be comprehended by knowledge." Logical accusation in Boyd's poems collides with what Dryden refers to as the "fairy way of writing." The mischievous intentions of which ghosts were accused and the delusion and fancy levelled at their frightened witnesses are actually made more stable and credible in the poems than the court witnesses and supposedly faithful verbatim testimonies, which in the turn become mere hearsay, rumour, and gossip. "Thy Witness false, tho' largely fee'd, / Poorly thy Cause support, / Relenting Lawyers, honest once, / Hiss thee from every Court" ("Altamira," 6). The

poems construct a new jury, both a divine judge and a receptive reading audience, who are asked to be not disinterested but deeply interested, as the willingness to believe of the "judicious Few" rests on an emotional response to maternal suffering. This is, after all, an acceptable reaction to a "natural, a tender" theme, "a tender Mother's Grief and Indignation for a much injur'd Son" ("Altamira," 2).

Ultimate authority and judgement in these poems is not derived from legal and state-sanctioned expression, but of vengeful and unearthly female power. The ghosts voice the inexpressible vulnerability of the living woman but also the feared power of the female fantastic--demon, angel, prophet and ghost. Boyd explodes expectations of empirical evidence and points to the unruly metonymic relationship between testimony and truth. Horrible visions of hell serve to "open the eyes" of the men on their deathbeds; an unnamed "pitying Friend," presumably attending Katherine in her childbirth, "Witness'd [her] last Distress" (37); and Katherine's legal "Witness" consisted of "Bought Wretches, who for weightier Bribes / At all that's vice would wink" (38). In spite of the burgeoning sentimental drive of the poems, Catherine and Altamira still offer coherent and knowing arguments for their innocence and even turn legal discourse on their accusers. The epistolary monologue traditionally offered a vehicle for self-defence, as well as expressions of loss and desire, but Boyd opts instead for direct address and physical confrontation.

At the end of both works, Boyd upholds patrilinear practice in the figures of the surviving children of these disastrous marriages, but she also encourages the thought of moral qualities of mind behind or beyond social place--the value of sentiment over property, the thoughts and feelings of women over the designs of the property-owning

classes. Lady Abergavenny was driven from her home "in cruel State" (31), from under the umbrella of class and into the storms of public opinion. Play with William's given name throughout the poem redefines his sin as one of individual "will" and personal betrayal, as opposed to titled authority.

The name "Altamira" itself yokes the personal and the ancestral, as it is, perhaps, reminiscent of Old English "Alton," meaning old manor house, "alte" as in height (morally-inspired and elevated), and also Latin, "mira," to astonish visually. The name may respond to Beckingham's poem about the Abergavenny catastrophe, which names the husband "Altamont,"[48] signifying a formidable mass—ancestral, patriarchal in Boyd's poems. More particularly, however, Boyd probably takes this name from Mary Davys's *The Reform'd Coquet* (1724) in which Altemira is seduced by Lofty with a precontract to marriage, which is subsequently stolen and then restored. In both Boyd's and Davys's texts there is a forced acknowledgement from villainous men that moral ties (promises and duties) should be honoured, but whereas Altemira is in a position to force her legal right, Altamira must go very far outside of the legislative process to obtain resolution and to pass judgement. If actual legal recrimination was an impossibility, Boyd seems to argue, since the defendants were dead and, as women, assigned *infant*, or "not speaking" legal status, the ghost motif lends direct testimonial, and it gives consent to indignation and violent opposition.

Conclusion

Four of the seven extant works by Boyd between1737 to 1745 emphasize the marvel,

[48] Coincidently, this is the title conferred on the eldest son of the Sligo family of Ireland.

the rhetorical power, and sometimes simply the quirkiness of famed historical persons rising from the dead to speak to the folly of the living.[49] These gothic texts warrant exploration, if only because they remind us of the broad base and of the fluidity of the supernatural phenomena of the eighteenth century. If a moral lesson is to be taken from Boyd's poems discussed in this chapter, it was that the physical and emotional state of motherhood would always score a moral victory over the paternal-romantic poem, journalistic court deposition, or common-law prerogative. Formal legal ties and processes are exploitive to women and fail to answer to higher laws of human bonds of compassion and kinship. Although these two poems are shaped by journalistic and ballad themes of instructive ghostly speech, they express female entrapment twenty years before either Horace Walpole's gothic or the eighteenth-century female gothic. These noble women are not merely romantically betrayed but undone by the institutions that should speak for them. "William and Catherine" and "Altamira's Ghost" exploit the public's ongoing interest in trials at a moment in history when cycles of abuse were unmentionable, and perhaps only partially grasped, and Boyd uses the gothic as a forum to make such unpleasantness conspicuously preternatural or even freakish.

Although the commercial realm of petty pamphlet selling and compositions placed burdens on Elizabeth Boyd, it also forced her to reevaluate her social politics and perhaps even her class attachments. It was likely that in the years after 1732 she witnessed impoverishment, wrangled with wealthy customers, and gradually become detached from centres of political and financial power, and thus better equipped to write

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[49] "Altamira's Ghost;" "William and Katherine;" Sara and Churchill, or, The Interview. A Poem" (also from *The Snail*); *Don Sancho, or The Students Whim*; "The Vision. or The Royal Mourners. A Poem." The last three will be discussed in the following chapter.

effective social criticism. In her works sympathetic yet romantic and sensational images of childbirth are gradually replaced by more incriminating images of infanticidal poverty. An older and wiser Boyd is even capable of locating the source of wrongdoing in the institutionalized insensitivities to female victims of poverty and violence.

Chapter Five: Writing for the Stage and *The Snail: or the Lady's Lucubrations*

"Bless me! a packet.--"'Tis a stranger sues,
A Virgin Tragedy, an Orphan Muse."
If I dislike it, "Furies, death and rage!"
If I approve, "Commend it to the Stage."
A. Pope, *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot*

Slaves wretched slaves! the journeymen of the state.
Philosophers who calmly bear disgrace,
Patriots who sell their country for a place.
Shall I for these disturb my brains with rhyme?
For these, like Bavius creep, or Glencus climb?
Mary Jones, "An Epistle to Lady Bowyer"

That Boyd was able to sustain a business for over a decade, from 1732 to 1745, is highly notable, as even the resourceful Eliza Haywood gave over her bookseller's shop after only a year "in the trade" in the early 1740's. There were, however, problems attached to the insecure and perhaps unsustainable material and cultural position.[1] Uneasiness can be detected in Boyd's apologies for the late publication of her periodical magazine in 1745, and subscribers had waited a full four years to receive this promised text, *The Snail: or the Lady's Lucubrations. Being Entertaining Letters between a Lady at St. James, and her Friend at Dover, of New and curious Subjects*. By Eloisa. An insufficient number of benefactors could have delayed the periodical's publication (if there were inadequate

[1] While contesting Eliza Haywood's presumed status and agency in the 1740's marketplace, Catherine Ingrassia admits that her "failure to sustain her shop is certainly suggestive of the increasing limited opportunities for women in the material and production aspects of the trade as the century progressed. But it is also indicative of the difficulties for anyone to enter the trade at this point in the century." "Text, Lies and the Marketplace: Eliza Haywood and the Literary Marketplace." Virginia Commonwealth University Symposium, Richmond VA, Spring 1995.

funds to "defray the Expense of Printing"[2]), or we may take Boyd at her word that the publication "hath been long frustrated by the Authores's [sic] unhappy State of Health, join'd to a Scene of complicated Misfortunes" (*Snail*).

These additional complications were perhaps mercantile in origin, as Boyd tried to break away from the direct sale of copyright after 1737, at which time she had been publishing with Charles Corbet(t), a reputable bookseller, publisher, and auctioneer, who dealt in plays, political tracts, and dictionaries.[3] Four of Boyd's last six publications were, however, in some manner self-financed, as she reissued two of her political poems (during the initial enthusiasm for war with Spain), and she independently published other works and sold them from her own shop.[4]

It is difficult to say whether the advantages of independent publication, such as not having to share profits, outweighed the disadvantages of self-financed projects, including wrangling with experienced publishers, absorbing costs of advertising, paper, and printing, and having sales restricted to particular retail outlets. Boyd's omission of

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[2] Pilkington famously collected for a subscription publication in Ireland but did not amass enough to pay for the printing. She writes, "amongst the Accusations, that fell heavy on me, one was, that I defrauded the Publick" (*Memoirs*, 259).

[3] Corbet(t) had a shop "in London, Addison's Head, next to the Rose Tavern without Temple Bar (1732-52)" (*Dictionary of Booksellers and Printers*, 61). He published the *British Magazine* after 1746 (there is no mention of Boyd here). He first shared the publication costs of Boyd's jingoistic "Admiral Haddock: or, the progress of Spain" (1739) with six other publishers of pamphlet literature (see Chapter One). He also sold several of Boyd's works from his shop, and she returned to him in 1744 for the publishing of "Altamira's Ghost."

[4] Boyd engaged Thomas Cooper and Henry Woodfall to print her works for her, presumably because both were known to offer reasonable prices. Cooper was one of the most prolific printers and publishers of pamphlet literature in the eighteenth century. Woodfall had a substantial business and printed for all the chief publishers of his day; he entered Boyd into his ledger in 1743-4 Jan as owing him a remaining 8s 6d for the printing of 500 copies of "Altamira's Ghost." She paid the majority of costs in advance. P.T.P, "The Ledgers of Henry Woodfall, 1737-1748." *Notes and Queries* 1.12 (1855): 217-219. Five hundred was a substantial numbers of pamphlets to sell from one location.

cancel and half-titles from her independent reissues of several of her poems suggest that she may have financed cheaper productions than her publishers were able to provide, and she apparently could not afford to advertise her works. Further, her self-financed titles were sold from her stationery shop only, whereas previously her publishers had been able to achieve wider distribution. This last drawback could have been particularly distressing because it was usually impossible to sell more than a handful of copies from a single bookshop. And yet despite these downfalls and the obvious risks that she took by acting alone, writing, advertising, proofing, printing, and delivering texts (Haywood was also known to have a servant stitch her sheets into books), Boyd was still able to fund and self-produce a number of publications at this time. All but one of these engaged with England's continental and imperial involvement in the war with Spain and the War of Austrian Succession.

Though clearly engaged with parliamentary and popular clamour to maintain a naval presence in the Mediterranean, Boyd's response to deepening martial engagement was conflicted: on the one hand motivated by blind patriotism and political ties to William Stanhope, 1st Earl Harrington, who agitated for war, and on the other personally and imaginatively discomposed by violence. As an outspoken businessperson, Boyd initially rallied behind popular patriotism which urged war after Admiral Edward Vernon's capture of Puerto Bello in 1739. Although she could not champion the Opposition Vernon, she published separate ballads and hymns about the victories of heroes, Admiral Nicholas Haddock, George II (at Dettingen), Admiral George Anson, and

others--typically valorous seamen portrayed as being abandoned by politicians at home.[5] In these works Boyd says much about the great traditions of Elizabeth I and her privateers, and she appeals to national sentiments and prejudices. Naval confrontations (1739-45) also may have brought back the author's strong memories of a father lost to Marlborough's campaigns: the periodical persona, Eugenia, claims of "the author" that her "deceased Father [had] long and zealously serv'd the Stuart Family, in a credible Employ"(15).[6] And the better part of this 1745 periodical is devoted to the denigration of Sarah Churchill and her grandson, John Spencer.

In all of her later productions, Boyd demonstrates a remarkable descriptive precision when it comes to detailing without mystifying the brutality of military engagements and domestic outcomes, which may suggest indecision about the popular Patriot cry.[7] After Dettingen she insinuates that even the bravest of English women would not regret an end to military conflict: "The Village desolate, no more shall Blaze, / Nor Dying Shriek's our manly Souls Amaze / The Infant Orphan, shall no more Lament /

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[5] The propagandist "Admiral Haddock: or, the progress of Spain. A poem." (Dec? 1739) offers a meticulous lesson (with footnotes) in British imperial history and urges full-scale war to preserve the "*Religion*, *Liberty* and *Laws*" that were first achieved by the cunning and bellicose "Great Eliza." As commander-in-chief in the Mediterranean assigned to protect Minorca, Haddock failed to prevent the junction of a Spanish squadron with the French fleet which lay in Toulon. (*GM* Dec 1741). "Glory to the Highest, A Thanksgiving Poem. On the Late Victory at Dettingen. To which is sub'join'd a Sacred Hymn, on the same Occasion, both done Extempore. By E--B" is also immoderately patriotic about "manly" heroes and divine intervention on England's behalf. Discussion of Admiral Anson is to come.

[6] This has been taken as an autobiographical statement by Lonsdale, but has not been proved as fact. Although the perfect hatred of the Marlboroughs does seem to spring from some deep personal grudge, the complicated use of personae in *The Snail* and the author's reticence to make any personal disclosures, could suggest that '"Eloisa" is another of Boyd's characters.

[7] Boyd's brand of patriotism took the form of growing opposition to Walpole and his peace policies, but her support for individual Court Whigs precluded her siding with Cobhamite Patriots who supported Prince Frederick and worked with the Tories. See Christine Gerrard, *The Patriot Opposition to Walpole: Politics, Poetry and National Myth 1725-1742* (New York: OUP, 1994).

Nor Widow'd Relics, Dye, of Discontent" (5).

At the time of initial outcry at real and simulated stories of Spanish outrages in the late 1730's, Boyd's relationship with Court had already undergone significant change. By 1740, when she penned her last extant poem to her longstanding patron, the Earl of Harrington, entitled *Truth, a Poem,*[8] she had come full circle back to her initial *Variety* opposition to Walpole and the King, though it is now the second Hanoverian king whom she opposes. Long disliked by the Queen and the First Minister, Harrington suddenly fell out of favour with George II in 1740. (Though she seems to know of Harrington's disfavour, Boyd may not have known that the ambassador was also an unlikely financial sponsor at this time, for Harrington applied for money throughout the year).[9] It was common for the opposition writers, as Boyd was for this text, to level charges of effeminacy and corruption at those ministers who would not adopt an imperialist foreign policy, but *Truth* does more than compliment a Lord and urge war. It is potentially Boyd's most libelous look at the Royal family and at a (by now) flagging Ministry, based on her prolonged status as outsider among traditional enclaves of male power. She was finally embittered by her futile hopes for maintenance from Court.

The poem *Truth* portrays the King as a vain, weak-minded puppet; it is deeply resentful about the demands of the corrupt "Atlas of the State" (Walpole) on honest

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[8] *Truth, a poem. Address'd to the Right Honourable William Lord Harrington.* By E---. Boyd was "Printed and sold by the Author, at the new Pamphlet Shop over-against the Crooked-Billet in Leicester-Street, near Burlington-Gardens. 1740."

[9] The King proposed dismissing Harrington: "This Hervey attributes to the influence of the queen and Walpole, who had been annoyed at Harrington's conduct in the previous year, when he had sent over from Hanover dispatches arraigning all the acts and measures of the queen's regency, and had even been suspected of advising the King to sign military commissions which, having delegated his powers, he was incapacitated from doing" (*DNB* vol 18, 927-31).

courtiers and artists, as Boyd expresses commiseration with Harrington's effort to maintain personal dignity in the face of necessary servility in the Closet. The diplomatist is portrayed as Dryden-inspired "Hushai" (6), the royal counsellor who pretends to work on behalf of Absalom (Walpole's Ministry) while he really serves the interests of David (George II and England). He is also cast as "Raphael," who heals the earth defiled by the sins of the fallen angels, and is "Barzillai like, kind duteous, firmly good" (6), which implies that Harrington is shut out by choice. (Barzillai declined a permanent position at the royal court in preference for his retired, traditional ways of the country [2 Sam 19:31-39]--a flattering if not an accurate representation of the honest but every-bit ambitious Harrington.)

Another of the poem's intertexts is Dryden's *Alexander's Feast*, which was set to music by Handel and commanded repeat performances throughout the 1739 opera season.[10] Dryden's poem opens at a feast celebrating Alexander's victory over the Persian Emperor Darius III, and it attributes Alexander's inspiration to fire the Persian castle (and avenge the burning of Athens) to Timotheus the flute-player. Boyd offers a prequel to this military and artistic victory by launching her poem with a vision of a similar event at the corrupt court of the (later) defeated Darius. Her poem opens, "nervous Truth the solemn Sounds inspire. / Truth's bold as Zorababel deig'd to sing, / To soft Soul'd Persia's flatter'd Idol King / Devoted to her Charms the youth eludes / His Lord's Applause, and Truth perforce intrudes" (3). This is a version of the English Court

[10] *Alexander's Feast* was set to music by Handel, and it saw eight performances in 1739: by the Gentleman's Club at Chapel Royal (Jan 18, 1739); King's Theatre Haymarket (Feb 17, 24 March 20); Lincoln's Inn Fields (Nov 22, 27) and in Gloucester (Sep 5, 6). In this year John Walsh also advertised a second edition of his subscription publication of the work set to music (ESTC).

from the perspective of one who was de facto an implement of its power (both Harrington and Boyd). Yet the youth bravely speaks "Truth" as the knowing, and in Boyd's own case, gendered Opposition.

Perhaps partly motivated by her attempts to bury her previous poetic attentions to Harrington's enemy, Walpole, Boyd envisions a younger version of herself (and perhaps Harrington) as Zorebbabel, the "Youth" who shuns the praise of the corrupt King Darius, for whom he is asked to perform. Zorebbabel is said to have won a battle of wits at the court of the King of Persia (1 Esd. 3ff) in a story that finds the "young men of the body guard" competitively praising the relative strengths of wine, kings, and women. Zorebbabel wins with the argument that women not only give birth to kings, they also receive the treasures won by men in warfare, can humiliate men, including kings, and yet are fawned upon by those whom they oppress. A latter addition to the story has Zorebbabel note that "truth" (firmness and reliability) is a power even greater than women.

Boyd makes things more complex by eliding the oratorical voice of the biblical court bard with that of the female poet who represents "Truth" and also with the power of the female behind the throne. (Caroline was dead by this time but her dislike for Harrington lived on in the King's and Walpole's treatment of him.) Thematically the poem addresses the power, especially of women and favourites, to sway, for good or for worse, and given Boyd's esteem for Caroline the very absence of a queen may, in her mind, account for the general corruption of the English Court. While Boyd may indulge the injured Harrington with a potential misogynist undertone at the expense of the Queen

she loved, the body of the poem looks to Walpole not to the dead Caroline as the "Ensnaring" "Wolf" and "Snake" (5). Victorious "Truth," personified in Spenserian tradition as feminine, is the instrument of an honest woman. Reminiscing with the aging courtier about a ('True' Whig) historical value of political power-sharing and accountability that mythically preceded corrupt Whig hegemony, Boyd writes, "An ancient Tale I once could well recite, / Seems justly to distinguish Wrong from Right; / In boldest Truths the boldest Facts relate" (4). She closes with an acceptance that "Our [Harrington's political and her own literary] weak Effort, Truth only can excuse." (8) Considering that "Truth," at least in the Biblical context of Zorebbabel's story, is nearly equivalent to the will of God, this is a powerful statement of the civic and moral judgement of the female political subject which appropriates the Biblical, Whig Patriot, and heroically-masculine connotations of "Truth"--justice, firmness, and reliability-- for the common female citizen.[11]

Perhaps Boyd had first arrived at this sense of her persona as activist, increasingly anonymous Englishwoman with national-communal opinions when the Queen died three years earlier, in 1737.[12] Her poem on this occasion was entitled "A Vision. Or the Royal Mourners. A Poem Sacred to the Memory of Her Late Majesty. Queen Caroline. Humbly Inscribed, To The Right Honourable Sir Robert Walpole."[13] Boyd

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[11] Felicty Nussbaum, "Effeminate Men, Manly Women: Gender and Nation in Mid Eighteenth-Century England" *Genders* 28 (1998).

[12] Boyd's use of initials or of "E. Boyd" on title pages of her later works suggests an androgynous writing voice, but within the works themselves she characterizes herself as a mature woman.

[13] "The Vision. Or the Royal Mourners. A Poem. Sacred to the Memory of Her Late Majesty. Queen Caroline. Humbly Inscribed, To The Right Honourable Sir Robert Walpole. By Elizabeth Boyd," bundle 73, item 37a MS., Cholmondeley (Houghton) Papers, U of Cambridge. This is the only known surviving

opportunistically addressed it to the Minister with the expectation or hope that he would continue the Queen's beneficence: "When Carolinas Virtues Newe the Lyre / Where but to Walpole Should the Muse aspire"? The seven very crammed pages remained in manuscript rather than being sold as a broadside, so the author apparently hoped for personal remuneration from Court as she adopted the role of advisor in times of known personal grief and foreseen political unease after the influential Caroline's death. This was Boyd's first articulate avowal of the Queen's powerful advisory and patronage roles and of her maternal and political influence.

As a consequence of this Royal death, she may have feared that she would lose the powerful contacts and patrons from Caroline's disbanded Household. For shortly after the royal funeral on the evening of December 17, 1737, the author had neatly transcribed the poem on the topic of the funeral procession into an exercise book. Although the work's reception and Boyd's potential connection with the minister are unknown, at one point in its (selective) replication of the details of the procession, the poem distinguishes honorary mourners among Caroline's Ladies of the Bedchamber, who may have continued their patronage up to that point even after their subscriptions to Boyd's novel five years earlier. Sarah Lennox, Countess Richmond; Anne Keppel, Countess of Albemarle; Frances Seymour, Countess of Hertford, and Maids of Honour Mary Meadows; Bridget Carteret; Penelope Dive; and Mary Scott, Countess Deloraine,[14] are all

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copy of this poem and the only known sample of Boyd's handwriting.

[14] Mary Meadows was the eldest daughter of Dorothy Boscawen and Sir Philip Meadows, Latin secretary to Oliver Cromwell and Ambassador to Europe. Pope's "The Six Maidens" observes, "Ev'n Cart'ret and Meadows, so pure of desires, / Are lump'd with the rest of these charming Hell fires." Deloraine was the governess to the young princesses. The others are discussed in Chapter three.

mentioned by Boyd as honorary mourners, and substantiated in the *Gentleman's Magazine* as following behind the "Royal Body." Boyd may have had more to gain from these women than she did from Walpole himself, but she seems nevertheless to have hoped a direct appeal would secure the Prime Minister as an anchor at Court.

After Caroline's lingering death from "Mortification of ye Bowels" in November (*GM*, 699), anonymous but particularly named poets had political and fiscal reasons to pen threnodies and monodies on the royal death. It is true that Boyd's financial reasons are easy to hypothesize: mainly that Caroline had been a strong supporter of the Ministry, and the poet perceived that the Ministerial crossroads of Caroline's loss could help her drum up partisan work from the government; although it is unlikely that Walpole had attention to spare for a writer clinging to moribund modes of patronage. As it would turn out, the Minister's authority was superficially pressured by Caroline's death, but at this time his emotions were touched by the loss of an ally, and the Opposition was protesting about high interest rates and the expenses incurred by the December "Order of Mourning," while even friends took the opportunity to air grievances.[15] So Boyd's low-born pledge of confidence may have been welcome. Boyd also seems to have written the poem because she felt compelled not only to memorialise but also to defend the Queen who was the subject of ribald epitaphs and crude epigrams by her detractors.[16] Her poem is also unimpressed by other complimentary poems that confined Caroline's value and

[15] Walpole suffered other embarrassments in 1737: a forced Act of Parliament fined the city of Edinburgh to compensate the widow of Captain Porteous for her husband's lynching after he was reprieved by the British crown on a charge of murdering Scottish citizens. This alienated powerful Scottish MP's. Walpole was also forced to withdraw a scheme to reduce interest on the National Debt.

[16] Though best known, Pope's horrible "Here lies wrapt in forty thousand towels / The only proof that C*** had bowels" was not isolated.

legacy to the Christian spiritual and patriarchally-inscribed maternal body. Through December and into the early part of January tributes to Caroline poured in to the newspapers and filled broadsides with stock images of the Queen as a virtuous mother, a "most submissive wife," patron of the "hoary sage," pious Christian, and wise ruler--like Elizabeth I, though "more mild."[17]

Judging by the other poems that were dedicated to the memory of Caroline, it was stylish for writers to envision (through a dream or trance) the Queen ascending to heaven or metamorphosing into an ethereal condition.[18] The "dream vision" narrative, widely used by medieval poets (*Roman de la Rose*, Dante's *Divine Comedy*, and Chaucer's *The Book of the Duchess*), had never entirely died out. Boyd's dream-vision parallels medieval allegorical encounters with allegorical teachers or heaven-sent guides, beginning with an unnamed, humbled female speaker, conceivably the poet herself, entering into a dreamlike trance, as she waits to view the funeral procession from Prince's Chamber, adjoining the House of Lords, across Old Palace Yard to the Abbey.[19] She reacts to a life-changing encounter with a ghostly woman who helps her carve a symbolic

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[17] Compliments were penned by Stephen Duck, "Gentlemen of Exeter," "Frances Hawling," Thomas Tickell and many more anonymous sources.

[18] For example, Anonymous, "The dream. A poem, sacred to the blessed and glorious memory of Her late Majesty Queen Caroline" and Stephen Duck's "A Vision on the Death of Her Most Gracious Majesty Queen Caroline" (1737) both frame the celestial vision with the poet's sleep: "Intruding sleep my weary Eyes opprest / Wrapt in a Vision, ---Where I cannot say."

[19] Boyd could have read the details of the funeral day in the newspapers or made the considerable distance to the Abbey from her current residence in "Grosvenor Meuse." The work may be an imaginative rather than documentary account of an elaborate but private affair. The *GM* (Saturday 17 Dec) details the procession, including two pages of nobles in procession. "[The] Ladies of the Bed-Chamber, Maids of Honour, and Bed-chamber Women, came to the Prince's Chamber about Eleven o'Clock in the Morning, and staid there till the Procession. . . . [It] began at about Six o'clock at Night from the Prince's Chamber, and passed thro' the Old Palace Yard to the Great North Door of Westminster-Abbey, all the Way being railed in, and floored, and covered at the Top with Boards; and lined throughout on the Floor, the Side, and over head with Black Bays."

space for woman's literary voice after the potentially devastating loss of England's first influential Queen since Anne over two decades before.

The supernatural experience in a state of partial sleep is also common to gothic narratives in which the dream is a conduit to spiritual forces. "The Vision" is yet another of Boyd's curious ghost stories falling within a category of political-mystical works of the time, which envisioned political figures--military heroes and national icons--returning from the dead to advise the nation through the voice of a poetic intermediator or 'medium' to the spirit world.[20] The spectator/ poet is lulled to sleep by soothing "Somnus," god of sleep, or more realistically by the long vigil on a dreary and cold (and in one realist touch, smelly) day. The opening passage is distinguished by Boyd's characteristic attempts to astonish her reader:

> Sad was the Eve, Dank dreary Fogs 'gan Swell
> All Nature jarr'd, Winds Blustered, Waters Fell
> Fantastick Vapours, Births of the Rude Storm.
> Dread Images, and Uncouth Horror's Form;
> Skies all Ablaze, with Glaring Meteor's Seem,
> And Raven's, flounder, in the glowing Stream.
> Triumphant Somnus, shook his heavy Rod:

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[20] The ESTC offers varied entries for odd political phantoms, such as Hosier, Marlborough, and Vernon (the Marlboroughs also appear as ghosts in Boyd's *The Snail*.) One also glimpses this in the popularity of varied ballad visitations in *Collection of Old Ballads* (republished throughout the 1720's). Dead writers were also rifled. "Sir Richard Steele's ghost, or a, full and true account of a dreadful apparition" (1730) offers an attack on Walpole, and Richard Glover's "Admiral Hosier's Ghost" (1740?) speaks to Ministerial war policy. This tradition of ghostly counsel can still be seen almost a century later in, for example, in Anna Seward's "Crugal's Ghost, Appearing to Corral" (1810).

A Deathlike Slumber, Swift indulg'd the god

The apocalyptic reaction of nature and the struggling ravens (first forced by a Stuart King, Charles II, to remain at the Tower for England's protection) suggest that London will perish without its Queen.[21] The dream narrative, however, gives consent to modest woman's redemptive fantasy of contact with this Queen's ghost, as the poet is lifted from a commonality with other "vast Wondering Numbers" into a privileged state of sympathetic womanhood with Caroline that, in effect, allegorically saves the future of all England.[22]

One of the work's primary motifs is the contrast between the formality of honouring the noble dead with monument and ceremony and the spontaneity of living warmth, sensation, and "common" feeling of the public. Equestrian and monarchical monuments, important to early-modern statuary and embodying the "timeless qualities" of the state,[23] are portrayed as lifeless and sinister. The Abbey in which the Queen was entombed is all gloom, haunted galleries, cold recesses, and ancient graves, issuing "Shrill, Hollow, Eccho's" and "Grim, Speechless Statues."[24] National purpose is instead

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[21] The poem's opening almost echoes (but for its seriousness) the cataclysmic demise of kings in *The Dunciad*.

[22] Possibly Boyd tapped into the superstitious mood at court after the death. George II expressed some fear of being alone. He engaged a page to sit up in his chambers and, astoundingly, demanded that the sarcophagus lid of his wife's coffin be broken open so that he could view the remains. See W. H. Wilkins, *Caroline the Illustrious: Queen-Consort of George II. and sometime Queen-Regent* (London: Longmans, Green and Co, 1904) 620.

[23] A. McClellan, "The life and death of a royal monument: Bouchardon's Loius XV," *Oxford Art Journal* 23.2 (2000): 1-28.

[24] Pilkington's account in her *Memoirs* of accidently being locked in the Abbey overnight suggests an analogous irreverence and aversion towards the royal statuary, which physically assaults the writer in her dreams (292-295).

encoded in the metaphorically 'living womb' of the Queen as the poet claims her as mother of English women.

As she sleeps, the roadside poet is stupefied as a more remarkable procession of "long hearsed" worthies (past Stuart and Hanoverian rulers) enters her view and marks her from all others in the crowd: "Singling me, from the ever Noisy Crowd; / The Sacred Manes, low, as they pass'd me Bow'd." This astounding honour is unexplained, simply accepted as the dream-induced privilege of the Queen's chosen interpreter, the female poet. The spirits accompany the latest "Royal Dead" to the "High vaulted Dome." With "Stately Tread / The Regal ghost, Exact Decorum Kept," and she was "of Mien Majestick, yet Commanding Love." Caroline next pauses at the Gothic lower part of the West front of the Abbey and "Receives a Lilly Wand, her Sceptre Dropt," a detail that Boyd emphasizes in a footnote is meant to be "allegorical": "signifying although she was not England's Queen she merited to be such." The dreaming woman listens outside to the strange sound of a "Choir," presumably Handel's "The Ways of Zion Do Mourn," which stirs her poetic purpose: "For yet, although faint, the quiv'ring accent Hung, / Intelligible, on the Strangers Tongue." Undercurrents of personal grief and affection for the Queen ultimately summon a less ceremonious ghost of Caroline back from the Abbey to the poet's side:

> The Crowd Dispers'd, the Mute Procession Done;
> Aghast with Dread, I'm Left alass alone;
> Transformed with very Fear, to Stupid Stone.
> When Lo, Late Albion's Queen, in Sables Deckt.

My Simple Dread, with Awfull Sweetness Check'd.

Art Thou Said She, a Wieght of Mortal Birth,

And Dost thou Shudder, at thy Mother Earth [?]

Throughout the poem the speaker's dawning recognition of maternal queenship serves to rebirth the mourning woman and to shape life from "Stupid Stone." To declare the maternal queen is principal creator, a "natural" authority, was still politically loaded in the early eighteenth century, as it could cast doubt on patriarchal rights to monarchy and leadership. Sir Robert Filmer had anxiously asserted in *Observations Concerning the Original of Government* (1652) that the male must be the "noble and principal agent in generation" in order for the metaphor of patriarchal familial and governmental authority to be effective. The discourse surrounding the ruler's physical self was still very politically encoded and depended upon the erasure or the scape-goating of the mother. In the works of Dryden and of the male Augustans, female power of generation "threatens familial and political order and must be suppressed."[25]

As an apparition of the physical, intellectual, spiritual, and maternal Queen, however, the ghost offers a secular annunciation for the woman, like Boyd, who is physically vulnerable but fearlessly creative. After quelling the fears of this humble "daughter," Caroline uses the "tender Mourner" as a messenger, commanding her to "Tell those we Left."[26] The ghost's message to individual members of the government is clear

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[25] Susan C. Greenfield, "Aborting the 'Mother Plot': Politics and Generation in Absalom and Achitophel" *ELH* 62.2 (1995): 267-293.

[26] Among those Caroline wishes to communicate with are her daughters, Amelia, Maria, and Louisa, the estranged Prince Frederick, Prince "Willy," King George, and Walpole. The Queen proceeds to interweave sentimental personal familial affections with affairs of state and to (unrealistically) forgive her hated son, Frederick, and mourn for her daughter Anna, presumably for her recent marriage to the monstrous figure of

and includes the forewarning, "O'er Royal Georges Council's" Caroline will "Still preside."[27] Then upon reentering the Abbey, "Bleeding Carolinus" is "Cares'd" by welcoming, strangely living statuary of past monarchs. An additional footnote tells us that "the one seeming to us, almost as Inanimate as the other," which presumably means that the literal body already resembles the stone in which it will become entombed. Boyd rather redundantly stresses that her intentions are metaphorical.

From the first moment of contact with the narrator to the poem's conventional final image of a cedar rejuvenating after lightening strikes, Caroline is not disembodied of the remembrance of the painful experiences of living and dying--the "rude pang, Embitter'd parting Life." (In this she resembles the ghosts of Altamira and Catherine.) To the visionary she can offer a painful sense of regeneration. Physicality is not a weakness prior to sublimated spiritual ascension. Her bloodied "phantom" vanishes phoenix-like in "pure Etherial Flame," bringing together two poetical meanings of the phoenix, to imagine rebirth but also to express matchless intelligence.[28] The poem, unlike others in memory of Caroline, is not over-determined by a mystically-Christian

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William of Orange. The anxiety for peaceful inheritance is among her chief concerns, as Caroline commands her teenaged son William to remember that his (unpopular) eldest brother is "foremost, of the Royal Line." Except for her patron, Stephen Poyntz, Boyd demonstrates clear disdain for male courtiers, as also for the inconsolable King who is told to rally, as "Tears ill become, the Hero of a Throne." She advises Walpole to continue, "Unbrib'd by Grandeier," his "Honest" advice to the family.

[27] The poem's didactic thrust commits successors, Princes Frederick and William, to the ideal of Classical learning
exemplified by Boyd's former patron, Stephen Poyntz: "Gay Fredrick's foremost of the Royal Line, / to Poyntz's Maxims, bid he still attend. / The Justest Tutor, the Sincerest Friend." It is evident then that the ghost allows Boyd to express and even stir court anxieties about succession, family troubles, the King's limitations, and Walpole's sway.

[28] Dryden also uses the phoenix image to image transformation after death in "Upon the Death of the Lord Hastings," and to describe Queen Mary's excellence and beauty in "To the Pious memory . . . Anne Killigrew." It was used in flattering descriptions of the (living) beauty and intellect of Queens since Elizabeth I (*The Poems of Dryden*, 1, 211).

transcendence.

When the poet wakes from her dream, a "Simple" woman, a mere "Wieght of Mortal Birth," she lingers between the interdependent states of waking and dreaming to feel once more (in remembrance) the news the Queen's death: "The phantom fled, nor more I saw the Dame, / Trembling I woke, when Lo the Fatal Sound; / The Queen is Dead, Instant my Organs Wound / Quick to the Heart, the thrilling Terror Spread." Previously made of "stone" from her sheer horror of the uncanny, the poet's full knowledge of the Queen's loss and value fleshes her again. She can mourn entirely as a subject and, somehow, as one who shares the Queen's plight as a physical woman, the Queen's bloodied maternal body having been offered "allegorically" as a communal sacrifice. The poet's unrestrained voice crescendos to urge all other women to mourn their loss: "winning Beauties," "Virgins," and "Lov'ly Mourners," "Mourn", "Weep", and "Cry." The Queen herself, we are told, is forever "pent in as narrow Room. / As full grown Births, Eer ransom'd from the Womb." This perpetual state of living memorial is the immortal maternal, "Though Ever Dying, Ever kept Alive."

Passing comment in Boyd's play *Don Sancho*, which was published two years later, hints that a patron, friend, or well-wisher had pointed out the impropriety of turning princesses into ghouls. Part of the volatility and non-confidence expressed by Boyd as a young poet, however, resided in her inability to trust the more earthly Anne—who she felt had cheated the nation with her miscarriages and then died before she could conceive of her as patron or muse. Although Boyd was still writing for Walpole in1737, the maternal iconography of dead Caroline manages to beautifully fuse two of the preferred feminist

themes of a mature writer: the nature of female royal authority and women's political entitlement to politicize the domain of matriarchy.

"Rouz'd by a Woman's Pen": Shakespeare's Ghost and the National Poet

Whether goaded by the queen's death (the lost patronage from Caroline's household), by Walpole's indifference to her ambitions, or by the general temperament of the political press, Boyd began to pen Opposition publications under her own name after 1737. *Truth* demonstrated her alienation from Court at a time when she also began to register an additional concern for altruistic nationalism, which spilled into projects for the benefit of the arts. Throughout the 1730's Boyd forged social connections in addition to her previous patterns of praise to a handful of patrons: specifically we know that she became a member of the Shakespeare's Ladies Club, probably in 1737 or shortly thereafter. The SLC was composed of noble women who backed a project to erect the monument of Shakespeare at Westminster Abbey, finalized early in 1741.

> A fine monument is erected in Westminster Abbey to the Memory of Shakespeare . . . Mr. Fleetwood, Master of Drury-Lane Theatre, and Mr Rich, of that of Convent Garden, gave each a Benefit, arising from one of his own Plays towards it. . . . The Poet is sculptured in the Dress of his Time, in white Marble, natural, free, and easy. (*GM*, 29 February, 1741).

The SLC also supported the staging of Shakespeare's plays and possibly had some influence over audience tastes and theatre repertoire throughout the decade. Katherine West Scheil observes that "The Shakespeare Ladies are consistently characterised as

reformers of the stage with a dual purpose: to restore Shakespeare and rational drama to the stage, and to banish tumblers, Harlequins, and other 'imported' entertainments."[29] The SLC was celebrated in popular newspapers and poems for its members' virtue, influence, and taste, as the Ladies "petitioned theatre managements to revive more Shakespeare in place of both libertine excesses of Restoration comedy and the irrational insipidity of Italian opera."[30]

Participation in a philanthropic club could point to Boyd's increasing social and economic comfort, as Dustin Griffin observes, "To be allowed to a lord's [or lady's] 'conversation' does not simply bring the opportunity to hear well-bred remarks . . . . It implies a rise in status, which in turn carried economic value at a time when income and access to economic resources were closely correlated with rank" (*Literary Patronage*,19). However, another scenario that may better explain Boyd's inclusion is that, as a modest shopkeeper and still an object of charity, she may have had insider and practical knowledge of the low entertainment world that these noble women wished to reform. She may have been valued as an author and as a holder and distributor of texts with bottom-level functions in the print trade. The *London Stage* confirms at least her ground-level theatre involvement:

> Wednesday 16 March 1742 at the Haymarket theatre: By Authority . . . will be presented a new Ballad-opera [author unknown], 6:30PM Boxes 5s Pit 3s Gallery

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[29] Katherine West Scheil examines the possible importance of the SLC to Boyd's work and ponders her acceptance as a member among the titled and wealthy. "Rouz'd by a Woman's Pen': The Shakespeare Ladies' Club and Reading Habits of Early Modern Women," *Critical Survey* 12.2 (2000): 106-126.

[30] Michael Dobson first discovered the identities of the SLC members. *The Making of the National Poet: Shakespeare, Adaptation and Authorship 1669-1769* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992): 147.

> 2s Tickets to be had of Mrs Boyd a Pamphlet Shop, in Leicester St., by Swallow St, opposite the crooked Billet; at Mrs Gearing's Toyshop near the theatre; and at the Doors of the Theatre.[31]

Perhaps Boyd benefitted from an informal exchange of creative opportunities for her auxiliary role as advertiser and ticket seller.[32] Additionally it is not impossible that this unnamed "Ballad-opera" that Boyd sold tickets to was her own two-act composition, *Don Sancho: Or, The Student's Whim, A Ballad Opera of two acts, With Minerva's Triumph, A Masque* (1739).[33] As an inveterate admirer of plays, she took a chance at this time to apply her bent for popular entertainment to the stage, rather paradoxically by writing this play to help cleanse the stage of artists much like herself.

From the published Introduction to *Don Sancho*, we know that at the height of Boyd's involvement with the SLC an unidentified "Friend of the Authors" spoke to William Rufus Chetwood, Prompter of Drury Lane, to obtain a reading of the new play.[34]

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[31] Scouten, *The London Stage* Part 3, 1729-1747. Henry Woodfall, a printer of Boyd's from this time who engaged in the printing and sale of theatre tickets, could have acted as Boyd's liaison to theatre publications and sales (*Dictionary of Booksellers and Printers*, 269).

[32] Included in *The Snail* is "A Prologue to Cato," "Design'd (but that it chanc'd to come to Hand too late) to have been spoken by Mr. Quin, in the character of Cato, in October, 1743, being the benefit Night given by Mr. Rich, [manager of Covent Garden] for the Benefit of the valiant Captain Norton" (46). Boyd evidently had ongoing peripheral involvement with theatre. Rich was also the first to propose the Shakespeare monument in 1726.

[33] *Don Sancho or, the Students Whim, A Ballad Opera of To Acts, With Minerva's Triumph, A Masque* by Eliz Boyd was printed by G. Parker (at the Star in Salisbury Court) and C. Corbet, and the booksellers of London and Westminster. Boyd reissued the work the same year, possibly engaging Henry Woodfall to print for her; he also printed dramas for a Mrs. Weddell. The reissue, which was "Address'd to Alexander Pope," was probably mindful of the simultaneous completion of the Shakespeare's monument that same year and subsequent heightened public interest. The play was included in Francis Longe's *Collection of Plays 1607-1812*. (Washington: Library of Congress Photo Duplication Service, 1981.)

[34] Chetwood was known to write airs and to help turn farces into ballad operas, and he was described by Aaron Hill as "a general in the field" standing with whistle and bell to command. *The Prompter* 12 November, 1734. Chetwood probably helped turn Farquar's *The Stage-Coach* into a ballad opera in 1730.

Boyd thanks him and expresses regret that the lateness of the season, dwindling audiences (the need for "Benefits"), and the fact that her play's ghosts (Shakespeare and Dryden) were now deemed superstitious on stage all may have impeded production.[35] Her projected patrons for this work were probably those whom she was unfamiliar, even uncomfortable with--a polite, 'reformed' audience--, as the play could have been intended for a benefit production to raise awareness and subscription money towards the monument. The author also apologizes for a past "Erroneous" venture into amatory fiction, her novel, which she promises to "revise carefully" as it was to be reprinted this year, perhaps with encouragement from the SLC.

By the late 1730's the once modish genre of ballad opera was passé, and only four new operas were produced in 1738-39, as compared with twenty-three in 1733. Conscious, perhaps, of this lack of interest and a rise in sentimental tastes, Boyd apologizes for the trifle, calling it a "meer ballad Farce." With the exception of Michael Dobson, modern critics have also reacted negatively to the strangeness of the work, which paradoxically is the widest read and criticized of her compositions. Nancy Cotton observes, "The play is odd. In Oxford three students persuade Don Sancho to raise the ghosts of Shakespeare and Dryden in the Botanical Gardens of the University, who offer

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[35] *Don Sancho* may have been unacceptable for performance because summer seasons at Drury Lane were on hiatus, occasioned perhaps by regular actors' jealousy of summer troupes. William J. Burling, *Summer Theatre in London, 1661-1820, and the Rise of the Haymarket Theatre* (Cranbury, NJ: Associated UP, 2000). For sales purposes, however, it was necessary for Boyd to stress the desirability of her opera according to the standards of Drury Lane; the more respectable publishers of the ballad opera would only print those performed at one of the major theatres. Future publishing negotiations also depended upon past stage success. L. J. Morrissey, "Henry Fielding on the Ballad Opera," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 4. 9 (1971): 386-402. Pauline Minevich observes that Drury Lane had a tradition of children players. "Signor Shakespearelli": David Garrick's operatic adaptation of A Midsummer Night's Dream." Canadian Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies Conference. Quebec City. 23-26 October, 2002.

curious literary advice: 'Wou'd you merit lasting Bays, / Goodness practise more than Praise.'"[36] The mostly wealthy students bribe the reluctant Don Sancho, a reduced gentleman, to raise the irritable spirits, who do little to satisfy their idle curiosity. The students are bumbling voyeurs of necromancy, immobilized by fear and awe as they observe a pantomime of the priests of Minerva's temple pay reverence to the statues of the "most celebrated ancient and modern Poets." After this "two beautiful Monuments rise, with the Names of Shakespeare and Dryden inscrib'd." The observers hurriedly transcribe the epitaphs into a "Pocket-book" before the great "Monument Scenes instantly sink" into the earth. Elaborate stage directions and a cast that may have included little people[37] suggest that Boyd expected visual display to help carry the plot. Sancho's "Evil" and "Good" Genii meet in mid air to battle to a "mix'd Symphony"; Minerva and Apollo descend and ascend in a "Triumphal Car"; and "little Boys like Angels are seen to hover" in the clouds.

By printing her unperformed play without waiting for another chance at stage production, Boyd showed acute awareness of the rogueries of theatre and publishing methods, which would cheat her into exposing her plot and forgoing profits. Prologues to several of her other works hint at a system of institutionalised plagiarism, and this one in particular suggests that unacted plays were especially easy spoils. Two players debate the merits of publishing an unperformed work:

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[36] Nancy Cotton, *Women Playwrights in England c.1363-1750* (London: Associated Presses, 1980) 165.

[37] Boyd cast "Lilliputians," which may have implied child actors; but she names more specifically "Boy children" elsewhere in the play. "Lilliputian Company" referred to Madame Violante's trained child actors in Ireland. Violante's favourite Lilliputian, Peg Woffington, may have been at Drury Lane in the "Green-Room" to approve the play. James Quin could potentially have also been involved in the reading of it.

1st Player . . . were I the Authoress, I'd Print,
It may be Play'd—in faith I'll give the Hint
Or Ouns by then, each juggling Pantomine,
Will filch the Tale, and Massacre the Rhime . . . .

2nd Player Print an unacted Opera, for what,
To damn the Copy, and expose the Plot:
Oblige some Pyrate, with a Virgin prize,
Poets, tho' rarely Rich, are sometimes Wise

Oddly, the fears of the "Authoress" may have be well-founded, as the pantomime she feared would emerge from her work was actually written by Henry Gifford and performed in the non-patented theatre of Goodman's Fields in March 1741: "Harlequin Student, or the Fate of the Pantomime, with a representation of Shakespeare's Monument, late erected." There is evidence to suggest that this was the first production in which David Garrick acted; when he then wrote his own pantomime, a "Christmas gambol" called *Harlequin Invasion*, in 1759, he returned to this statuary devise where Shakespeare's monument forces the trickster harlequin from town. Garrick's plot has been credited with innovative national and canon-forming techniques--which actually can be traced back to Boyd.[38] In the moment it seems there was little recourse for the original composer but to

[38] Denise S. Sechelski, "Garrick's Body and the Labor of Art in Eighteenth-Century Theatre," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 29.4 (1996): 369-389. The (possibly) filched work (Gifford's) bears only passing resemblance to Boyd's, though it does, as she predicted, substitute action for dialogue. It features a similar appearance of the gods, including Minerva, followed by the marble statue of Shakespeare rising to awe and to shame the lesser artists and their stage stunts. (*Harlequin Invasion* also features Mercury, as Boyd work does.) John O'Brian writes that "Garrick's opposition of Shakespeare to Harlequin was shrewd and decisive tactical move within that larger process [of canonization], a local appropriation of pantomime popularity from the 1720's to the 1750's that enabled him to offer Shakespeare as an emblem around whom a broad range of literary associations, historical and nationalistic, could condense." "Harlequin Britain:

move fast through publication, or as Boyd puts it, "The Victor's he, that runs the Curcuit first."

The comic mode and the use of British history, myth, and patriotic emblem inspired those who participated in the writing, performing, and selecting of English operas in the 1720's and 1730's. As Suzanne Aspden observes of the English opera and the broadening of the theatre-going public, "an image or idea from popular history could resonate within a broader cultural consciousness" and "could allow room to improvise continuity between past and present and between social strata" (41-2).[39] Mid-century, Shakespeare was subject to competing versions of cultural authority, "the centre of a struggle for the right to speak for the core of national culture." (Dobson, 134) Boyd registers awareness of this in her description of the rise of statuary at the hands of Peter Sheemakers, which resembles the rough birthing of the national artist: "When rich-vein'd Earth rob'd of immortal stone. / Sees England's pride, beneath the Artist Groan, Then whiles half form'd the beauteous Embrio glows. It would be just to say—thus Shakespeare rose." But to involve oneself in this sculpting competition was to stumble into a mire of political motivations, gender politics, and canon-formation, as artists and other interest groups tried to claim the national writer as their own.

It is evident from *Don Sancho* that Boyd's female friends and patrons saw the statue as the embodiment of high intellectual accomplishment, which is probably why the

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Eighteenth-Century Pantomime and the Cultural Location of Entertainment," *Theatre Journal* 50.4 (1998): 489-510.

[39] Suzanne Aspden, "Ballads and Britons," *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* (Oxford: OUP, 1987).

author addresses Alexander Pope in the "Prologue" to her 1740 reissue of the play, as he along with "Earl of Burlington, Dr. Mead, and Mr. Martin" were the esteemed trustees of the monument.[40] Boyd speculates in the "Prologue by the Author" that in addition to aiding her career "Cause" by reading her play, Pope will share with her a mutual objective, the Westminster statue, which she admits is a more legitimate expression of English cultural values than the farce at hand.

> We to the Closet fly to aid our Cause;
> Where Toils of Love or State the Great unbend,
> Lost to the babling Croud, the social Friend;
> Where the letter'd Youth the Man of Taste
> We hope to see the Bard of Merit grac'd[41]
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Tho' small our Hopes, and smaller still our Merits
> We've many Precedents of lucky Spirits.
> But where, oh where shall we a Critick gain!
> A Friend sincere of the all-hallow'd Strain
> Who frankly will his Sentiments declare,
> Or make an untaught Female Toy his Care
> Great Faults revise, and little Errors spare.

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[40] The men had served on a committee to raise money for the project by public subscription before it was designed by William Kent and carved by Peter Scheemakers. Dr. Richard Mead attended Walpole and George II. Five members of his family subscribed to Boyd's novel.

[41] Implied mutual interest and identification with Pope's illness and his persona (quiet, retired influence) was commonly expressed by women poets. See Claudia N. Thomas, *Alexander Pope and his Eighteenth-Century Women Readers* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 1994).

Of thee, great Pope, the Nation's darling Theme
We beg Perusal of this Medley-Whim;
Thee, Judge sublime, its Advocate we chuse
For who can so correct or so excuse;
Thee Homer, where all humane Virtues dwell

This passage playfully echoes *An Essay on Criticism*, as Boyd holds Pope up to his own high standards for a critic.[42] Although Pope's precise role in the statue's erection is unproved, he was regarded as a connoisseur of funerary monuments, and his direct influence on the Westminster statue's inscription and pose have both been suggested.[43] Boyd also acknowledges Pope's shaping of reading tastes through translations and editing, and she connects these to the Abbey project and to her own aim of marketing classical values.

Boyd foregrounds the theme of the threat of cultural debasement and also implies criticism of low art forms. Her treatment of the theme appears, however, somewhat insincere, as though the author did not quite share the lofty cultural vision of the backers of the Abbey project. For example, the ghosts of Shakespeare (and Dryden) appear as on-stage as a terrific examples of the author's tendency to push her art over the top. Ben Jonson's famous "My Shakespeare Rise" did not have a literal resurrection in mind, nor

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[42] See especially lines 631-642 of Pope's *An Essay on Criticism*.

[43] Morris R. Brownell, *Alexander Pope and The Arts of Georgian England* (Oxford: Clarendon P, 1978). Boyd's text mysteriously refers to Pope's hand in the actual design of the monument, especially in her promise that at the sight of the stage ghost Pope "won't be scar'd, / Or, at an Apparition, change a Beard." This could suggest that if Pope were to see Boyd's ghost on stage he would not be forced to re-imagine how the bard looks, which may imply an insider knowledge of Pope's special criticism of the initial design of the statue's appearance--particularly its beard. This also could be one of Boyd's unusual colloquial expressions, but I was unable to locate a history for the phrase "change a beard."

did the mid-century tradition in plays, epilogues, and poems which depicted a resurgence of literary merit--not a miraculous and quite literal exhumation.[44] The form of *Don Sancho* similarly suggests ambivalence about popular tastes which included lower arts. On the one hand it mocks them through comic characters' relish for masque, pantomime, and stage gimmicks. The students absurdly mistake the priests of Minerva for ruffian players; observing the gods, Joe Curious remarks, "A pleasant Amusement this, as good as a modern Masque *Georgy*. I observe too, the Gods employ Lilliputians in their *Mysteries*." One the other hand, it is evident from the play's themes that Boyd saw Shakespeare as a mutable living idea that was certainly open to a variety of adaptations at the hands of less-polished writers. The fact was that farces and masques like *Don Sancho* were very close to 'debased' pantomimic entertainments; a number of eighteenth-century pantomimes identify themselves as 'masques,' and structurally pantomimes followed the two-part (serious and comic), classical-and-escapade format that Boyd's does.[45] Denise S. Sechelski's comment on the Giffard spin-off is true too of Boyd's work: farce ultimately "loses out to the verbal and intellectual merit of Shakespeare within the thematics of the play, but legitimate art's triumph is a transgressive victory because it is

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[44] Shakespeare's ghost speaks in many prologues and epilogue of the period, from Gildon's *Measure for Measure* (1700) to Mrs Hoper's Queen Tragedy Restor'd (1749). In 1747 Samuel Johnson would write a prologue for the *Merchant of Venice* to be spoken by Garrick at the reopening of the redecorated Drury Lane, which echoes the "Shakespeare rising" motif as a site for stage reformation: "When Learning's triumph o'er barb'rous Foes / First rear'd the stage, immortal Shakespeare rose" ("Prologue to the Opening of Drury Lane Theatre, 1747").

[45] Elizabeth Cooper, Pénelope Aubin, Eliza Haywood, Mrs Aubert, Mrs Egleton, Mrs Weddell all preferred Restoration intrigues, nonsense, misuses of language, wit, bizarre characters, and farcical scenes to sentimental modes. The contrast between bumpkin absurdities of the characters and the blank verse dignities of the masque would not have been lost upon contemporaries. Boyd's patron Frances Hertford, for one, disapproved of the social infiltration implied by such operas.

produced [through] illegitimate discourse"--in other words, puns, jokes physical comedy, absurd situations, type-characters, and the gimmicky appearance of a phantom on stage.[46]

The plot does, however, seem more serious in its criticism of the kind of debasement of culture that comes from pleasing the whimsy of a private investor (although the Abbey project was primarily funded by public proceeds). Don Sancho is the only character with talent (both natural and book-derived ability) to bring Shakespeare back—his craft, although it is the craft of low necromancy, is of the highest order, but he is to be pitied as a true artist, a "reduc'd Baron, ruin'd by Party Spleen and boundless Bounty" who thinks it "profane to wake the sleeping Dead, and urge Heaven's rage." He is "Yet over-power'd" by the students and by "hungry pressing Want"—one student callously remarks, "how sad it is when Poverty cramps Merit and when the "tempting Gold prevail'd." (Don Sancho angrily observes, "See, noble Sirs, what Sancho bears to serve you.") All talents are reduced to raising shadows of the dead men, so little wonder that modern critics would mark the penultimate advice of the ghosts of Shakespeare and Dryden themselves as empty propaganda.[47] Merely annoyed at being disturbed, they sing, "Was our Angel-state design'd Vain and light as humane-kind. Toys and Trifles to pursue . . . To Behold a pageant Rise, For the Wretch who starving dies." Moreover their ghostly counsel, especially "Goodness practice more than Praise; The happy Bard no

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[46] Denise S. Sechelski, "Garrick's Body and the Labor of Art in the Eighteen-Century Theater," *Eighteenth Century Studies* 29.4 (1996): 369-389.

[47] See Margarete Rubik, *Early Women Dramatists 1550-1800* (London: MacMillan P, 1998). She also claims that Boyd's ghosts "have nothing to say" (127). The authors of *Women Playwrights in England, Ireland, and Scotland 1660-1823* call it an "odd ballad opera" and write, "In the context of the Licensing Act (1737), Boyd's play got hearing but was not produced at a time when the numbers of the theatres were diminished and there were almost no new plays" (113). David d. Mann and Susan Garland Mann, with Camille Garnier (Boomington: Indiana UP, 1996).

more disturb," could be looking askance at the statuary project and classing it with the 1730's commercial passion for all things Shakespeare.[48]

Notably one of the work's primary themes is the tremendous (sinister) effort exerted to "honour" (erect in stone/summon as a ghost) a dead poet, while the living writer is left to starve. One of Don Sancho's students remarks wryly, "Aye, poor Jack Dryden, after being starv'd to Death and buried by the parish, is grown a famous Fellow, brave Encouragement for modern Poets, e'en take up the Trade." The bitter irony that her own play remained unperformed while an impressive effort was directed towards dead marble was not lost on Boyd. Her epigraph for the work reads, "All know to damn, but oh, how few to save."

Further, the play's tribute to authors of mixed status suggests Boyd's continued ease with varied authorial purposes and reputations, which resembles her earlier attempts to credit modern talents, especially in *Variety*. When the characters come to a pantheon of artists worshiped in Minerva's Temple (perhaps inspired by Kent's Temple of British Worthies at Stowe) in the devotional masque in Act Two, they find "several Priests and Priestesses attending to the Altar, who are employ'd in burning Incense to each different Statue." All the poets are dead: Shakespeare, Dryden, Congreve, Waller, Gay, Addison, Charles Boyle, 4th Earl of Orrery, George Granville, Lord Lansdowne, and John Sheffield, Duke of Buckingham. Her choices are modishly patriotic in their espousal of popular English tastes: if the theatre-going public was broadening to include less

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[48] In the "Epilogue" to *Don Sancho*, the comical Joe Curious searches for his "Paper-Skull."

classically-minded audiences, writers like Boyd would direct the tastes of these audiences through accessible literary forms and authors.

The inspiration behind Boyd's play (the SLC) is cited as an alternative "new" power behind the selection and restoration of the national poet. If (unmentioned) female authors belong to the same category as the starving lot "buried by the parish," the female patrons, playgoers and readers were in Boyd's mind now worth more serious consideration. Her final and longest appeal in her Prologue addresses these women:

> I've clean mislaid young Cupids Bow and Dart
> Ladies your Aid, or we shant win a Heart;
> Be Just, be Kind, theres Mercy in those Eyes,
> Minerva's Triumph, be the Fair Ones Prize
> Whose Magick Charms, controul the learned sage,
> (Forget the Errors of the Female Page)
> And once again, bid Shakespeare bless the stage;
> Soul-Soothing Shade, rouz'd by a Woman's Pen,
> To Check the impious Rage of lawless Men

Don Sancho seems to have caught the proud and competitive spirit of the SLC,[49] which can be observed in club member Mary Cowper's poem "On the Revival of Shakespeare's Plays by the Ladies in 1738," which suggests "as members of Minerva's own sex, only

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[49] Though not directly involved herself, Haywood praises the SLC: "Some ladies have shewn a truly public Spirit in rescuing the admirable, yet almost forgotten Shakespeare, from being totally sunk in oblivion--they have contributed to raise a monument to his memory, and frequently honoured his work with their presence on the stage . . . in preserving the fame of the dead bards, they add a brightness to their own, which will shine to late posterity" (*The Female Spectator* vol 1, 1745, qtd. in Dobson, 147).

the Club have been able fully to represent the goddess's wisdom and partake of her power, and it is only they who have successfully summoned Shakespeare back to life."[50] The audience who could approve Boyd's play had similar power when it came to stage repertoire, and yet Boyd was not so overawed by the SLC project that could not see the humour in the idea of a woman first and finally accomplishing Shakespeare's cultural resurrection as a pantomimic and phantasmal act on stage. She expresses a sincere wish that this would happen even before the Abbey statue was completed.

In conclusion, the topics and tone (nicely poised between adoring and irreverent) of *Don Sancho* do not bend to the more polite tastes of the Shakespeare's Ladies Club. It is clear that Boyd continued to take an active role in promoting stage productions beyond the SLC activities, and she may have felt herself adrift from the men and women whom she aided in the task of elevating some authors and genres above most others. By and large, her youthful trust in the entertainment value of art held fast throughout her dealings, even with her high-principled and most respected of allies.

The Periodical *The Snail*: "varied Revolutions" and "private Fortunes"

Critics of Jürgen Habermas have questioned his assumptions of accessibility of the 'public sphere' by arguing that the bourgeois public sphere was not universally welcoming to those outside of its financial, class, education, and gendered preserves. At the same time, questions have been raised about the unproblematic relegation of family

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[50] Mary Cowper was the niece of Boyd's patrons, Anne and Sarah Cowper and William, Second Earl Cowper. The mother-in-law of the most active member of the SLC, Susanna Ashley-Cooper, first wife of 4th Earl of Shaftesbury, had subscribed to the *FP*.

intimacy to the "private sphere," as this implies that "the rules governing the sexual division of labour in the family have been placed beyond the scope of justice."[51] Thus the strict division of private and public is now being renegotiated, and in-depth studies of women's allegorical political works, amatory fictions, and party writings from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries are able to dispute earlier critical claims that eighteenth-century women's writing do not address concrete political issues, that women took issues as they found them, and that they wrote primarily on the behalf of others.[52] The research of Catherine Ingrassia and Lois G. Schwoerer, for example, has shown that women of all ranks attempted to influence government decisions, and that there were increases in the amount and diversity of women's literary incursions on issues of war, taxes, and imperial policy. Moreover women themselves were quick to point out the interplay between the Ministerial, vocational, and familial at all pivotal moments in the eighteenth century.

Specific to this study, we can now observe that women's writing in the decade after the 1739 declaration of war on Spain seems to have fixed on the topics of social responsibilities of the landed, qualities of heroism, and social efficacies of peace and war. These concerns sometimes took traditional forms of protest action, as, for example, when Opposition women led by the Duchess of Queensbury were involved in a "feminine riot in the House of Lords" to protest women's inadmittance to the gallery to hear the debate

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[51] Seyla Benhabib, *Situating the Self: Gender, Community and Postmodernism in Contemporary Ethics* (Cambridge: Polity P, 1992) 109.

[52] This specific claim was made by Marilyn L. Williamson in *Raising Their Voices; British Women 1650-1750* (Detroit: Wayne State UP, 1990).

on policy towards Spain.[53] Titled or common, Whig or Opposition, deferring to imperialist trends or arguing for peace, women weave a common thread throughout most of their writing from the 1730's and 1740's. This is what Sarah Dixon identifies as "Native Crimes,"[54] or violence and poverty which are produced at 'home' (whether familial and domestic-national) as an outcome of wars fought externally. Several poems in Dixon's miscellany collection, for example, satirize motives for war, the naive enthusiasm of young soldiers, and the foundations for military heroism. Similarly Mary Barber, once accused by her editor of offering "domestic and everyday events" so that "her topics are not the grand topics of her male counterparts,"[55] not only wrote furiously about English oppression of the Irish but also (in the tradition of "widows petitions") about the sufferings of families of those killed in war. In "On Seeing an Officer's Widow distracted, who had been driven to Despair by a long and fruitless Solicitation for the Arrears for her Pension," she remarks sarcastically, "Oh tell it not; let none the story hear; / Lest Britain's martial sons should learn to fear."[56]

These same concerns and some personal success with independent workmanship inspired Boyd's last publication in 1745, her periodical entitled *The Snail: or the Lady's Lucubrations. Being Entertaining Letters between a Lady at St. James, and her Friend at*

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[53] Mary Wortley Montagu tells this story mock heroically. See Myra Reynolds, *The Learned Lady in England 1650-1760* (Boston Houghton Mifflin, 1920) 202-3. Several of the women involved in this 'riot' were Boyd's former subscribers.

[54] Sarah Dixon, "On the XXXth of January," *Poems on Several Occasions* (1740).

[55] Mary Barber, *The Poetry of Mary Barber*, ed. Bernard Tucker (Lewiston, NY: Mellen P., 1992). An earlier, equally remarkable poem is Sarah Egerton's "To the Queen," lamenting "why are we barr'd, or why I Woman made, / Whose Sex forbids to Fight, and to Invade" and "For you I'd fight, Mankind from Pole to Pole, / Till all the Kingdoms, in one Empire meet" (10).

[56] Mary Barber, *Poems on Several Occasions* (1734). (Lonsdale, 89).

Dover, of New and curious Subjects. By Eloisa.[57] Although the tone and social stance of its fictional correspondents, Eugenia and Montezella, stress that the work is unattached to commercial discourse and the production of commodities and is to be read in domestic isolation, one barely has to scratch the surface to be reminded of the work's production and transmission by a patriotic woman labouring in the capital. This is not insignificant during a decade that saw women increasingly positioned outside of the realm of paid economic activity; nor is it insignificant that this work is disputatious about a woman's presumed 'special status' of secure isolationism as it was also promoted as an essential component of imperial policy throughout the 1740's.

It is unsurprising that Boyd states in the 'Preface' to *The Snail*, "As we have no Help from any Pen, but our own, we humbly hope our Errors will be thought excusable." Not only was she the sole editor of the project (while still operating her business), but she also resolved not to solicit reader correspondence, that means by which most early periodicals editors relieved the pressure of weekly output.[58] Boyd does, however, adapt the essayistic monologue traditional of *The Tatler*, more particularly Bickerstaff's popular

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[57] *The Snail* was initially advertised as forthcoming in Boyd's "Truth, a poem. Adress'd to the Right Honourable William Lord Harrington" (1740), also a self-financed publication (though presumably with some gift from William Stanhope). At this time the periodical's "First Number" was promised "to be deliver'd to the Subscribers against *Christmas* next" as "four Half Sheet, Weekly Papers" priced at "one shilling" (two or at most three half-sheets were standard, so Boyd promised bulk). However, when it came time to publish *The Snail,* Boyd substituted another popular periodical format: a more substantial (forty page) miscellany issued in one month. The dates and the grouping of the periodical's letters indicate that *The Snail* contains the work of two months (November and December 1745).

[58] In criticism, the essay-periodical is differentiated from the magazine, which commonly offers varied features written by others in addition to the single editor or persona. Boyd's work utilizes the miscellany format of the magazine and offers two voices, but this is transparently the work of a single editor.

"Lucubrations," or late-night meditations by candlelight from "[his] Own Apartment."[59] If Isaac Bickerstaff's isolation as a recluse and a bachelor allowed him to study character, the apparently single status of 'Eugenia,' this periodical's dominant persona, enables her also to "give a just Portraiture of the Mind."

> Our *Snail*, like the *Tatlers* of the celebrated Mr Steele, sticking close to plain Sense and sage Morality, leaving News and Politicks to wiser Heads . . . . Truth, Novelty and Variety being design'd our constant Topics, from which, as far as we are capable, we shall never recede, humbly presuming, that amongst the Throng of vain, pert Scribblers, the well-meant, altho' weak Attempt of a mere Woman, may probably succeed.[60]

The essays offer the illusion of intruding upon a private coterie correspondence (between the periodical persona Eugenia and her friend Montezella) that also includes the reported opinions of a circle of their male and female friends. They are intermixed with excerpts of poetry and news traded between this "Lady at St. James, and her Friend at Dover," a miscellaneous format that was first adapted by Eliza Haywood. The paradigm of coterie circulation, including a pamphlet exchange joined with friendly correspondence, also may have offered something of a metatextual experience for contemporary readers, as this

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[59] The authors of the *Female Spectator* respond to a question put to them by one their readers: what does this word "lucubration" of Bickerstaff's mean? The "Society of Women" suggest it is serious meditation, or perhaps "off hand" rather than pedantic writing, but Lucinda ventures that Bickerstaff overused the word, perceived his error, and so naturalized the term: "endeavored to persuade the world that he had all along designed it." Eliza Haywood also refers to her thoughts on "private life" as "lucubrations" to distinguish them from 'masculine' works that are more suited for the "polite Coffee-Houses."

[60] Boyd also claims that "the slow, sure Snail pretends to no more than downright Honesty." "Truth and Simplicity" were conditions of the feminized periodical ever since Bickerstaff's Jenny Distaff could claim that they were qualities that women "may more justly pretend beyond the other Sex." *Tatler* no.36

was one historical method of distributing periodicals themselves--friendly exchange through the mail.

The name Boyd selected for her periodical was probably directly influenced by a visit which the "Female Spectator" makes to the country. Here Haywood describes how the ladies attempt to domesticate snails, collecting and then bringing them indoors to feed in pails of dirt. As ugly and "contemptible" as they seem, Haywood writes, there is "something peculiarly graceful and majestic in them" (55). The snails are feminine, as "the shell . . . serves her as a house or cavern, in which she may either hide herself, or peep out of, as she pleases and as occasion requires."[61] For Boyd and her female readers, this time had now arrived.

Criticism rarely notes that Haywood's *Female Spectator* (1745-6) emerged, as did Boyd's less-influential equivalent of *The Tatler*, at a very pivotal moment in British national and imperial history. Men and women who were otherwise removed from the Court and Commons and from continental involvement participated in reports of England's (so far ineffectual) naval aggression from the newspaper and periodical press.[62]

Recent debate about early eighteenth-century periodicals speculates whether the periodical form provided a "woman's perspective" on events, places, and discourses from which women were increasingly excluded, or whether they helped organize an alternative "feminine" social reality by defining and reinforcing a community based on separate

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[61] Eliza Haywood, *The Female Spectator: Being Selections from Mrs. Eliza Heywood's [sic] Periodical (1744-1746)*, ed. Mary Priestly (London: John Lane, the Bodley Head Ltd., 1929).

[62] Kathleen Wilson writes that the "accessible, homogenized national identity cultivated by newspapers was in fact a delimiting one that recapitulated the self-representations of the urban upper and middle classes, and especially their male, white, and English members" (74). "Citizenship, Empire, and Modernity in the English Provinces, c. 1720-1790," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 29.1 (1996): 69-96.

interests.[63] The *Female Tatler* (1709-10), edited by 'Mrs. Crackenthorpe,' the *Whisperer* (1709) edited by 'Jenny Distaff' and *The Parrot* by Eliza Haywood all exploit the traditionally "feminine" sphere of scandal and gossip in order to enter the realm of political commentary--it seems this was a precondition to debate. Each of the editors, however, proposes her periodical, as Boyd does, as an alternative to masculine concerns. Kathleen Wilson observes that throughout the eighteenth century "the social acceptance and valuation of women's forays into politics was variable, dependent upon class and political context, as well as those fluctuating variables that connived at suspending or amplifying the conventional misogyny of English political writers"(81). Patriotic expression, statements of political affiliations, displays of politically-inspired silks were acceptable "forays" at key moments of national concern, "fiscal-military and nation-state." Yet Wilson writes that women were in a "double-bind . . . being simultaneously urged to promote love of country and yet constrained by their lack of legal and political status and injunctions to domesticity" (78)-- and domesticity was, of course, the primary impulse of most periodicals.

The Snail was written at the height of Boyd's jingoistic engagement with military battles and English heroes, and yet the unusual title of the periodical itself implies the leisurely and protected nature of this 'shell creature,' woman, and fittingly aims "to be an Amusement to the Fair Sex," presumably safe in her home during "these rude, shocking

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[63] See Rachell Carnell, "It's Not Easy Being Green: Gender and Friendship in Eliza Haywood's Political Periodicals," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 32.3 (1998-99): 199-214; Katherine Shevelow, *Women and Print Culture* (London: Routledge, 1989); Ros Ballaster, "Eighteenth-century Women's Magazines" in Margaret Beetham, Elizabeth Frazer, and Sandra Hebron *Women's Worlds: Ideology, Femininity and the Woman's Magazine* (London: Macmillan Education, 1991).

Times of general War, [of the Austrian Succession] when most have Brothers, Sons, or Husbands absent" (iv). This implication is misleading. As a woman with a lively and nebulous political past, and as a businessperson who felt she had a stake in the urban economy, Boyd closely followed and debated battles and England's foreign policy. *The Snail*, however, is the first of her civically-concerned works to constitute its general audience as female, and yet it is also more disputatious than any of her military poems or any of its periodical counterparts. While its specific political motivation may include the recently-failed attempts of John Carteret, Earl Granville, to oppose France and to revive the glories of Marlborough (Carteret was forced to resign in November 1744, the month of the first number of *The Snail*), the periodical also refuses to protect women readers from the details of news of the ongoing wars. Rather it encourages women to form express opinions if England is to engage in other momentous continental engagements. In other words, although framed with reformist and nationalistic rhetoric, *The Snail* does not seek the separatist consolation of female community that is founded on satisfying domesticity. While it registers fears of further war, especially for women left in England, it politicizes the idea of 'home' concerns (England and private life) and criticizes the 'domestic' isolation of man and women from each other's worries.

Although the work promises comic and philosophical relief for women troubled by such "universal Desolation by Land or Sea, (inhumane Scene of Action)," it refuses to withhold the "vary'd Scenes of terror'd Death" that are also so pictorially represented in Boyd's propagandist broadside poems. One of its primary motifs is English "civic masculinity" (solid inner qualities and a physical fitness for war), which, Boyd hints, is

bought at too dear of a cost; and this popular issue is meditated by women corespondents, friends, who ponder what role they play in civic masculinity and the shaping of nationhood. The last poem of the periodical, for example, "Admiral Anson," celebrates George Anson's capture of a Spanish galleon and gold and seems on the surface to be joining contemporaries in championing privateer violence:

> He sees, like Gods, unmov'd fierce Fleets engage,
> And Fiend-like Fury, belch Iberia's Rage,
> Here Vessels sink, there half plunged Crouds expire;
> Sport of wild Waves, and torid Balls of Fire;
> Legions uunumber'd [sic], prove the bloody Blaze,
> Who thrilling die, and Soul astonish'd gaze,
> Whilst Thunder growling Winds the Living maze.
> Hoarse with Heaven's Wrath the loud lung'd wondrous Roar
> Sailors Dismay, devast the distant Shoar,
> Unpeopl'd World in Heaps unburied lie,
> And Wretches unprepar'd, momentous die,
> Who vainly seek the wat'ry World, or dry.
> Seas foamy swell join Life devouring Air (47)

Boyd's opposition to war, though, can be variously located in appalling images of loss of life; in the chauvinist suggestion that Spain would be manageable if it was "By British Valour, British Goodness taught" (49); in the reminder that for every success in battle,

there had been several disastrous "Balchen"[64] losses; and especially in the poem's closing sardonic claim that captured Spanish gold might be put to good use in appeasing the "starving moans"of "weeping Babes" and "widow'd Wives" (51). Before Wollstoncraft and her contemporaries, Boyd insists on the interdependence of the domestic and the national.

Although obviously aiming to elicit pity and anger from her woman readers, Boyd is half in earnest when she says that "Gold shall their Sorrows dry" (47) as the better part of the periodical is devoted to urging the government and individual wealthy English families not to repeat the mistakes of Marlborough's war by forgetting the common soldiers and their families. This criticism takes the form of a lampoon of the alleged hyper-insularity and greed of Sarah Churchill, Duchess of Marlborough. The Duchess was a long-time anti-Hanoverian (a continuing sore point in the 1740's split between patriots and the Old Corps Whigs), and her grandson and heir, John Spencer, was loathed by the Royal family. Boyd is clearly fascinated with this powerful woman, but the popular gossip and printing of the Duchess's recently-proved will and codicil confirmed the author's suspicion of the family's lack of charitable concern. The Duchess had not only left vast sums of money to Walpole's enemies, Chesterfield and Pitt, precisely for being enemies (though as Sarah Churchill herself put it, she was trying to "prevent ruin of [the] country"), she had also left twenty-seven landed estates and a huge wealth to a grandson, John Spencer, but with an astounding codicil: "I have settled all the Estates in

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[64] The disappearance of Admiral Sir John Balchen and his 11, 000 men in the Bay of Biscay was thought (perhaps imaginatively) to have been heard by those on a far-off shore: "yonder a dying Coarse, / With tumultous Waters wet and hoarse" (51).

the Paper upon John Spencer and his son; but if either of them take any employment or Pension from the Crown they are to forfeit the whole and they are to go to others, as if they are dead."[65]

In Boyd's heated opinion, not only was the heir himself pointless (the alcoholic John Spencer would "squander it in Riot" [37]), but more meaningfully the will also failed to acknowledge, let alone compensate, those who made this great English wealth possible:

> The rich young Heir, trips gaily o'er the Grave,
> More joyous in the sable Funeral Trappings,
> Than blooming eastern Brides, with Diamonds brac'd.
> But oh! the Widows Curse, the Orphans Tear,
> The starving Soldiers Bead, inhumane snatch'd
> From famish'd Lips, even in the Rage of War,
> Cankers the Whole.----
> Secret Corruption preys upon the Bulk,
> And eats unseen, the basely boarded Gain[66]

Eugenia snidely remarks that only "delirious Disorders" (5) could "see her [the Duchess]. . . in her last Moments so entirely lost to every social Duty as to neglect in her

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[65] *The Codicil to the last will and testament of her Grace Sarh late Duchess Dowager of Marlborough* (1745). The Duchess hired Nathaniel Hooke to write a defense of her person in *An Account of the Dowanger Duchess of Marlborough* (1742). Given the Duchess's propensity to change her heirs and to manipulate her children and grandchildren, the sensational wording and contents of the will (with "codicil annex'd,") was a topic of gossip and print in 1744-45 (ESTC).

[66] This may be a reference to Admiral Anson's illegal capture of the Spanish gold.

last solemn Will, to leave a Christian dividend to Penury" (7).[67] For Boyd, private interest usurps civic purpose, and this corruption of private interest begins with the "Littlenesses" (14) and tyrannies of families themselves: "What brutal Parent would destroy his Offspring, or beggar him and his to future Years, merely to gratify a Grandsire's Will . . . Madness of Power uncurb'd, where Vanity on Record proudly lords it" (14). If narcissism and self-indulgence turned human interest inwards, public greed, sustained by myths of national and heroism, makes an even wider and more calamitous sweep.

Part of the politico-military agenda of the 1740's, indeed of eighteenth-century English nationalism, was to drive out irrational 'feminine' passions--foreign and domestic. The Duchess represents stereotypical vindictiveness, unreason, and luxury that would emasculate service to the state by tying one's heirs to the whim of a single generation of political customs and allegiances. But Boyd actually redefines what such service should consist of. As Rachel Carnell has pointed out, female friendship is itself alien to national patriotism, which is founded on the exclusion of the effeminate and the feminine. Interpreting the gossip, letters, and poetry of mutual friends and providing anecdotes for her friend Montezella, the periodical's speaking voice, 'Eugenia,'[68] single-handedly carries the first two letters and their poetic attachments. She is a woman of indeterminate age and an affectionate correspondent but also she is more politically engaged and pointed in her commentary that, typically, are the more sentimental personae

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[67] The early 1740's "cited unprecedentedly high poor-rates and spoke of 'an universal Face of Poverty upon the common People" (Langford, *A Polite and Commercial People,* 153).

[68] See Chapter four, note 36 for a discussion of the name 'Eugenia.'

used in more paternalistic periodicals. In the third letter Montezella responds to Eugenia's cosmopolitan knowledge and rhetorical vehemency with her own "sensible" observations. Their social concern, discerning judgement, and blunt conversation refute misogynist propagandist efforts stir patriotic feeling with accusations of "feminine" weaknesses. *The Snail* is unconcerned with manners and domestic duties but serves the purpose of sharing women's "real Opinion of the main" (14).

While Boyd herself was likely socially more peripheral than her 'Eugenia' seems to be, one parallel is their mutual dependence on patronage. Writing from "St. James," Eugenia complains to her married, "more refin'd' (15) domestic friend in "Dover" that she herself in London is "A Court Implement to be made use of as occasion serves" (26). Montezella is not to be envied either, however, as she is an emblem of national vulnerability in "Dover-castle" (47), at the 'gateway' to the present war.

This literal fortress is a perfect actualization of the familiar trope of the nation as a fortress, and a woman as its acquired treasure. (Presumably Montezella's husband, Alonzo, "ever busied in Observations of the Great World, as we call it. viz. the Maritime Scene of Action," [16] is one of the men garrisoned at Dover in 1744-5.) Montezella's potentially privileged position of insider-knowledge and security on the "home front" is Janus-faced, the other side being her extreme insularity in the midst of national events. Initially Eugenia complains that Montezella is too busy to maintain the correspondence, as though captured by some nameless monster:

> I can't help imagining our Condition much on a Parallel with a Couple of unhappy Lovers, parted by rigid Parents. Sometimes I fancy my Montezella

> in the Situation of one of the Romantic Heroines of old, confined in a formidable inchanted Castle, guarded by a monstrous Giant, skillful in the Art of Magic, who design her anon for a dainty Breakfast, with the Prospect of nothing but the pitiless elements to condole her Misfortunes; Sea and wilds being generally their nearest Neighbours. (26-27)

The monster is of course the threat from France,[69] but its (national) ghoulish potential is immediately exploded into the interpersonal by the attached poem that follows Eugenia's observation: "William and Catherine" (discussed in Chapter Four) exposes the "unnatural deeds" of personal and private violence. This poem, in which a wife returns as a ghost to avenge her landowning British husband's poor treatment of her family, presents a rival ideology to the affective "feminine" and, by extension, apolitical realm. It discredits the myth of a tranquil domesticity by conjuring up a domesticity that spills over (acidly) into public gossip, court room, and literary ballad. Eugenia is the informing writer (Boyd herself) who teaches her domestic friend, Montezella, and the general female reader, how to read discourse efficiently. Montezella, then, becomes an active correspondent in her own right, who sends her own poetic attachments and political commentary. Montezella thanks Eugenia for the knowledge gained from the poem: the author and her female reader now feel a "Sympathy most laudably commendable, a Tale all generous Fair Ones must lament, her [Catherine's] Story being truly pitiable; a Prodigy of Barbarity, as the Poetess observes, inhumane anst [sic] unprecedented"(44)

Arguably with the voice of Eugenia Boyd urges shared female knowledge and

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[69] Hostilities formally commenced in February 1744, but invasion was avoided by bad weather in the channel.

discussion between friends that challenges exclusionary notions of political subjectivity. In *The Snail* Boyd renegotiates the term "bravery" (45) to include the ethical stances of female readers, from emotional sympathy for victims of violence to righteous anger at legal and state policy that excludes women from effective participation in decision making. The negative example of the Duchess of Marlborough must be expelled as an antiquated role played by the formerly luxurious and self-serving aristocratic woman, and it is replaced with the female-instructed and strongly-felt and expressed opinions of less socially exalted but more empathetic female friends. Thus what looks at first glance to be the most embittered of Boyd's works could been seen as the most positively feminist of her texts. The Queen's death in 1737, or less romantically the events surrounding Walpole's fall and Boyd's own publishing freedom, loosened the author from her dependence on Court patronage. She was, over time, drawn back--voluntarily, openhandedly-- to the issues that had concerned her as a very young woman: the inspiration of female royalty, the status of art as free from patronage, and the writer's license to express herself without adhering to rules and hierarchies of aesthetic worth. It is fitting that Boyd would dedicate her final work to the entertainment and instruction of The Fair Sex in general" (30), and sign it (as Mary Astell had signed *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies* in 1694), "a lover of her Sex" (26).

Conclusion

Literary historians are enticed by the idea that the researcher can reclaim the 'lost' women writer by advancing "with lights across the waste of years to the rescue of some stranded ghost,"[1] as Virginia Woolf imagines the deliverance of romantically obscure artists. Recovery is, though, a tangled task that involves more than opening the dusty pages of books to spring loose stifled merit. Dust rests heavily when a writer is female, and it is especially difficult to shake when she was of low status and never expected that her art would be anything but short-lived.

In a rare glance back at Elizabeth Boyd, B.G. MacCarthy erroneously notes that in the early eighteenth century there were "legions of such women" (36), implying that hoards of social nobodies clamoured to catch the public's eye to fend off starvation, despite their conspicuous lack of ability or sincere artistic ambition. MacCarthy is accurate in one part of her claim, that the mysterious woman, who called herself Louisa, Eliza, Eloisa, or simply E. Boyd, was a hack who soon slipped the minds of those she so desperately wished to please--nobles, politicians, erudite women, and the other unpredictables of the "Town." Feminism's responsiveness to professionalism has, however, made it easier for us to accept the role that financial need played in forging the political and artistic postures of early writers. Now revisionary studies of specific professionals, from Aphra Behn and her "daughters," to Walpole's male hirelings, and to

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[1] Virginia Woolf, *The Common Reader* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1925) 110.

the gritty female proprietors of the printing trades,[2] have expanded the researcher's tastes to appreciate the variety, ingenuity, and sheer staying power of those who tilled their way through a very rugged early print culture. Further, an appreciation for the commercially-inspired has made it possible for us to challenge the commonality of individual writers, such as Boyd, with the "legions"of other professionals; and even to challenge her sameness with a now pleasingly large set of better-remembered women of her time.

Certainly postmodern taste for the marginal, curious, and even vulgar tells us that Boyd is an interesting study. Her very uniqueness as a female writer, as one who was seemingly socially low and exerted herself in trade and yet had remarkable and, so far, unexplained access to Court knowledge and other privileges, is sometimes regrettable; for prototypical experience could significantly lighten the load of literary and historical enquiry.

It has become a truism that the obscurity of most women writers can be attributed at least in part to historical culling on the part of editors and writers of syllabi. When I began this project, though, it soon became clear that Boyd's fascinating and unique career was recoverable through the details of her publishing patterns. What was more tantalizing was the elusive personal letters, which I still believe could be discovered: surely she cannot be altogether absent from the letters and diaries of those she bombarded with petitions, poems, and subscription lists over nineteen years of survival in print and 'at board'?

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[2] See Brean S. Hammond, *Professional Writing in England, 1670-1740*; Paula McDowell, *The Women of Grubstreet;* Cheryl Turner, *Living by the Pen: Women Writers in the Eighteenth Century*; Tone Sundt Urstad, *Sir Robert Walpole's Poets: The Use of Literature as Pro-Government Propaganda, 1721-1742.*

But even if archival proof that this retailer and her shop existed is never found, we know from the works that her stationery and pamphlet-selling business was established with two hundred and eleven pounds raised largely from nobility, and thereafter she had intricate business ties. We know that she wrote for the moment--pamphlet verses, hasty miscellanies, political criticism, and flattery. She found political giants uproariously funny but very often useful and sometimes even sympathetic. She argued hot-bloodedly for war, and equally heatedly against it; she flouted gender restrictions on literary themes and styles. She consistently fought for the entertainment value of art. Thinking of Boyd's wonderfully original style and her motley life works, I find that all the positive meanings of eclecticism come to mind with just as much alacrity as Swift's comment on low art of his time: packed with "Town-Jests, and Coffee-house Conceits," its sole ambition is to befuddle the reader. In this respect, Boyd study can offer a rejoinder to criticisms of individual author studies, including Valerie Frith's disapproval of "biographical attention to the neglected few."[3] In Boyd's case, the impossibility of fashioning her as a self-coherent or introspective woman also rules out an idealization of her as a purposive individual. Emphasis on individual subjectivity may, in fact, prove to be more possible for genteel women writers than for the non-elite.

Clearly availability of texts fosters critical interest in writers, and the next stage in Boyd recovery would be to make an edition of her writing available. To do this well, however, would obligate an editor to capture her market-orientation, her playfulness, her

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[3]Valerie Frith, ed. *Women and History: Voices of Early Modern England* (Toronto: Coach House Press, 1995), xix.

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political allusiveness, and even her occasional inaccessibility. So far, the few who have gone to the trouble of seeking out extant copies of her works have demonstrated a generic preference for her novel, play, or some of the more emotive short poems. Her most challenging and original long poem, *Variety*, and her polemical texts anticipate (and merit) critical attention. Today's scholarly preferences parallel what Boyd recognized in her own day as a hierarchy of literary interest, though in her time poetry and classical translation formed the peak. The cumulative effect is to make Boyd, and who knows what other writers, reflect a persisting belief that women were somehow on the lyrical outskirts of power and not deeply committed to the economic and political moment. Historical particularity and modish whimsy are not mere aberrations but reflections of the livings and the mind sets of artists. They are what enable us to re-imagine the contributions that were made by many ordinary people.

Further, study of Boyd suggests that some of the more difficult questions about the pull of mainstream politics and the efficacy of women's involvement in national affairs really can be traced in one woman's life-long struggle with London politics and the print marketplace. As one critic noted, "it is easy enough--a little too easy--to see the poets of the Augustan age . . . as mainly a choir of singing birds nesting in the pleasant gardens of Twickenham and Stowe, with an ugly off-stage chatter of London gutter-sparrows in Grub Street, and a few migrants between the two."[4] If nothing else, I hope that this study has provided a leisurely and nuanced look at one woman's shifting material

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[4] O.H.K Spate, "The Muse of Mercantilism: Jago, Grainger, and Dyer," *Studies in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. R. F Brissenden (Canberra; Australian National UP) 119.

circumstances and allegiances. This, I also hope, suggests the apparent absence from history of any writers who were quite like her.

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Appendix
Chronological List of Boyd's Original Works

1727 *Variety: a poem, in two cantos. Humbly offer'd to the god of change to which is annex'd, an answer to an Ovid's epistle.*

1730 *Verses most humbly inscrib'd to His Majesty King George IId on his birth-day.*

1730 *Verses humbly inscrib'd to Sir William Morris, bart. on his return from his travels, by Louisa.*

1730 *A poem on the arrival of the Right Honourable William Earl Cowper, after a dangerous illness. Against his birth-day.*
including "To the Right Honourable Ladies Sarah and Anne Cowper, on the Noble Entertainment, On Earl Cowper's Birth-Day August 13, 1730."

1730 *To the right honourable William Lord Harrington on his return to Paris.*

1731 *Verses congratulatory, on the happy marriage of the right honourable the Lady Diana Spencer with the Lord John Russell.*

1732 *The Happy Unfortunate; or, the Female Page: a novel. In three parts.* Reissued in 1737 by Olive Payne as *The female page: a genuine and entertaining history, relating to some persons of distinction . . . In three parts compleat.* By the ingenious Mrs. Elizabeth Boyd.

1733 *The Humorous Miscellany; or, Riddles for the Beaux. Humbly Inscribed to The Right Honourable the Earl of Cardigan.*
including "Love Triumphant over grandeur: On The Marriage of the late Dutchess of Leeds with the Earl of Portmore."
"Riddle I."
"To Mr. John Lockman, on his Excellent Ode to his Grace of Buckingham, 1730."
"Verses writ Extempore, at Request."
"To Theodore Jacobson, Esq; on his new-built Retirement, called Lonesom, or Jacobson's Grove."
"A Song, Made at a Lady's Toilet, whilst she drest at Windsor."
"Riddle II."
"On the Death of an Infant of five Years Old."
"Riddle III Spoken Extempore, on being told I loved Damon."
"Verses occasioned by a Fly's winging its Way into the Eyes of a beautiful Lady, when in the Country; from which uneasy Pain she was relieved by the Goodness of the Handsome Dutchess of -----Written

Extempore."

"Riddle IV."

"To Mr. B--K, on his leaving his Mistress for want of five hundred pound."

"On Losing the Copy of Shadow, after reading it to a Lady. Writ Extempore."

"A Song: Design'd for the Ridotto. Tune of Three Children sliding on the Ice."

"On the Death of an Infant of five Days old, being a beautiful but abortive Birth."

"Verses Congratulatory on the Happy Marriage of the Honourable Mrs. Anna-Maria Mordaunt, with Stephen Poyntz, Esq."

"Verses on Capt. D---s, who after subscribing to a certain pamphlet, and keeping it upwards of nine Months, both refused to pay for it, and returned it Unsalable."

"On the Death of the Excellent Mrs. Hyde, Wife to Capt, Hyde. Addressed to her Daughter."

"The Dispute; Or the Religious Ladies."

"On an Infant's lying some Days unburied, for Want of Money, the Father being absent and ill."

"The Advice" and "The Reply."

"To Lady Sarah Cowper on her Birth-Day."

"Writ under the Impossibility in the Beaus Miscellany, by a Gentleman."

"A Song: Design'd for the Ridotto. Tune of Tipling Philosophers."

"To Mr. John Goddard, on his intending to forsake the Muses."

"On Solitude. Writ when in the Country."

"Advice to Aurelia. A Song."

1737 *The happy North-Briton. A poem. On the marriage of His Grace the Duke of Hamilton and Brandon with Miss Spencer.*

1737 *The Vision or the Royal Mourners. A Poem. Sacred to the Memory of Her Majesty. Queen Caroline.*

1739 *Don Sancho: or, the student's whim, a ballad opera of two acts, with Minerva's triumph. A Masque.* Reissued by Boyd the same year.

1739 *Admiral Haddock: or, the progress of Spain. A Poem.* Reissued by Boyd in1740.

1740 *Truth, a poem. Address'd to the Right Honourable William Lord Harrington.* Reissued by Boyd the same year.

1743 *Glory to the highest, a thanksgiving poem. On the late victory at Dettingen. To which is subjoin'd a sacred hymn, on the same occasion, both done extempore.* Reissued by Boyd the same year.

1744 *Altamira's ghost; or, justice triumphant. A new ballad. Occasion'd by a certain nobleman's cruel usage of his nephew.*

1745 *The Snail; or, the Lady's Lucubrations.*
including "Zara and Churchill, or, The Interview. A Poem: Humbly Inscrib'd to the Two Noble Brothers, Charles Duke of M---------H, and The Honourable Mr. J-------S--- ---"
"William and Catherine, or the Fair Spectre, A Tale: Humbly Inscrib'd To the Right Honourable G---- Lord A------
"A Prologue to Cato. Extempore."
"Admiral Anson: A Poem."

Boyd may have reissued *The Snail* the same year under the pseudonym Bartholomew Broadbottom in *The Beau's Miscellany: or, the Agreeable Variety, in Prose and Verse.*

Abbreviations

AH	*Admiral Haddock: or, the progress of Spain*
AG	*Altamira's ghost; or, justice triumphant*
CP	*The Complete Peerage*
DNB	*Dictionary of National Biography*
DS	*Don Sancho: or, the student's whim*
GM	*Gentleman's Magazine*
ESTC	English Short Title Catalogue
FP	*The Happy Unfortunate; or, the Female Page: a novel*
HM	*The Humorous Miscellany; or, Riddles for the Beaux*
S	*The Snail; or, the Lady's Lucubrations*
V	*Variety: a poem, in two cantos. Humbly offer'd to the god of change*